Admission Policy of Holy Family Senior School

School Address: Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare V95TF67

Website: www.holyfamilyseniorschool.com

Roll number: 07315N

School Patron: Bishop of Killaloe

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 24th 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 Holy Family Senior 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

Holy Family Senior School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Killaloe, Bishop Fintan Monaghan.

"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, a living relationship with God and with other people; and
(b) including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; 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;

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 Holy Family Senior 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.

Holy Family Senior School is founded upon Gospel values and our Catholic tradition. The staff of Holy Family Senior School want to create a climate of physical, emotional, social and intellectual safety for students, teachers and parents so that teaching and learning can occur within relationships of mutual valuing and respect.

With this in mind, the teachers of the school see education not just as providing students with knowledge and skills but also as providing for the emotional, social, sexual, physical and spiritual development of students.

In this school we want students to be self-motivated and to be at peace with themselves, others and the world. Achievement of these aspirations by the school requires the help and co-operation of students, teachers and parents.

3. Admission Statement

Holy Family Senior 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, ‘gender ground’, ‘civil status ground’, ‘family status ground’, ‘sexual orientation ground’, ‘religion ground’, ‘disability ground’, ‘discriminate’, ‘ground of race’ and ‘Traveller community ground’ shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

- Holy Family Senior School will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating 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 requested to do so by the Council.

- Holy Family Senior School will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

Holy Family Senior School 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 of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Holy Family Senior School is a school which has two established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

Holy Family Senior School, with the approval of the Minister of Education, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students in 3rd and 4th class with a Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia).

Holy Family Senior School, with the approval of the Minister of Education, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism.

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.

Holy Family Senior School is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special classes attached to Holy Family Senior School provide an education exclusively for students with Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia) from 3rd and 4th class and for students with Autism. The school may refuse admission to these classes, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

Eligibility Criteria for Admission to the Autism Class

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for Autism when the following is provided in support of such an application:

Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of special educational needs: Autism: DSM IV/V OR ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)

AND

- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need(s) evidenced in the professional reports

AND

- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same

AND

- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for Autism.

Eligibility Criteria for Admission to the Special Class for Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia) Class for 3rd and 4th class children

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special 3rd and 4th class for SLD (Dyslexia) when the following is provided in support of such an application:

Professional report(s) outlining:

- A formal written diagnosis of Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia) from a psychologist
- General cognitive ability (IQ) of average or above-average as assessed by a psychologist
- Scores on 1st or 2nd percentile (or lower) for one of reading, spelling or reading comprehension.
- The primary presenting difficulty and primary cause of the pupil's failure to achieve must be dyslexia.
- She or he must be in or about to enter 3rd or 4th class.

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:

1. Holy Family Senior School Siblings

From Holy Family Senior School, applicants with siblings currently enrolled in the school (including stepsiblings, resident at the same address).

2. **Holy Family Junior School Siblings**

From Holy Family Junior School, applicants with siblings currently enrolled in the school (including stepsiblings, resident at the same address).

3. **Parish**

(a) Children residing in the parish and who are 1.5km or less in walking distance from the school, priority eldest; this will be measured by Google Maps using Eircode to Eircode walking distance
(b) All other children residing in the parish.

4. **Past Pupils**
   Children and/or siblings of past pupils, priority eldest.

5. **Others**
   All other applicants

Please note, a copy of a utility bill may be asked for as proof of address.

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:

They will be arranged in order of age, priority eldest.

If born on the same day, then by lottery.

Oversubscription Criteria Specific to the Autism Class

If the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of places available in the Autism Class, the following selection criteria will be applied in this order of priority:

1. Priority given to children currently attending Holy Family Senior School who have a diagnosis of Autism as outlined in Section 5 who meet the eligibility criteria and have a letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class

2. Holy Family Junior School Siblings (including step-siblings and / or foster siblings, resident at the same address) of a student currently attending Holy Family Senior School.

3. Parish – Children living within Ennis Parish

4. Others – all other applicants,

Oversubscription Criteria specific to the Reading Class

If the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of places available in the SLD (Dyslexia) Class, the following selection criteria will be applied in this order of priority:

1. Priority given to children currently attending Holy Family Senior School who have a diagnosis of SLD (Dyslexia) as outlined in Section 5.
2. Holy Family Junior School Siblings
3. Parish – Children living within Ennis Parish
4. Others – all other applicants

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

(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 class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned.

(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;
(other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school. In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

(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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January each year only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Holy Family Senior 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 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 Holy Family Senior 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 Holy Family Senior School 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 board 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 Holy Family Senior 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.

Placement on the waiting list of Holy Family Senior 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.

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 13.

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:

Applications for enrolment during the school year will be considered subject to school policy, enrolment cap, available space.

Such applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

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:

Applications to enrol into classes other than second class intake may be received by the school at any time during the year. In the event that the school is full or the second class intake procedure has not yet been addressed, then the parents will be informed of the situation and the student will be placed on a transfer list (if an application to enrol is received). This list is populated in chronological order of receipt of application to enrol (stamped with the date of receipt in the office).

When a place becomes available in the school, and the second class intake procedure has been addressed, then it will be offered to applicants on the transfer list in order.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Holy Family Senior 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

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, 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:

Children will remain in class but do not participate in the religious instruction and will engage in alternative class work.

In the case of school religious ceremonies, non-participating children are provided with a supervised classroom for the duration.

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.

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.

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.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Holy Family Senior School on 09/12/2024

Signed: Criona Smyth Chairperson, Board of Management

The contents of this policy have been approved by St. Senan's Education Office, acting on behalf of the Patron.