

Athboy Community School



Admission Policy Draft September 2024

Admission Policy of Athboy Community School

School Address: Athboy, Co.Meath. Eircode: C15XY73 Roll number: 91517D

School Patrons: Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath, Louth Meath Education and Training Board

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 23 September 2024. 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 Athboy Community 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

Athboy School Community school is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Bishop of Meath and Louth Meath Education and Training Board.

Community Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Community Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened on November 2011 following an amalgamation of St. Joseph's Secondary School and St. James' Vocational School. The values of Louth Meath Education and Training Board as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Bishop of Meath in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school are respected and cherished.

The core values of Athboy Community School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, our school (Athboy Community School) provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Athboy Community School provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In Athboy Community School, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

3. Mission Statement

Athboy Community School prides itself on creating a safe, caring, creative and culturally diverse environment and on offering an innovative curriculum which challenges students to achieve their full potential.

We promote an open culture in which relationships between staff and students are prioritised.

We commend and reward positive behaviour and encourage student participation in all aspects of school life so they can flourish academically, physically, emotionally, spiritually and psychologically.
“Mol an Óige agus tiocfaidh sí”.

Our Core Values are; Care, Inclusion, Safety, Creativity and Respect.

Athboy Community School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

- (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.

Athboy Community 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.

Athboy Community 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.

Athboy Community School is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provide 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 classes a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

Athboy Community School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism. (See Appendix D – Admission Policy for the Special Class (An Cuan))

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

The special classes attached to Athboy Community School provide an education exclusively for students with Autism and 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.

First Years

Each year an Open Event will be held. Invitations and details of how to apply for enrolment will be sent to local feeder schools and notices placed in the local media. The closing date for applications will be announced at this time. Successful applicants will be notified in writing. Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list from which any subsequent vacancies in the year group will be filled. The school will arrange an information night for parents/guardians prior to the commencement of the academic year.

All applicants must:

- Return a fully completed Application Form, verified by Birth Certificate by the due date.
- Undergo assessment once enrolled.
- Have completed primary education or equivalent standard.
- Agree to Code of Behaviour of Athboy Community School. A written undertaking will be required.

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. Brothers and sisters of pupils already attending Athboy Community School who reside in the catchment area as defined by the Department of Education and Skills.
2. Children residing in the catchment area.
3. Children of school staff.

4. Brothers and sisters of pupils already attending Athboy Community School who reside outside the catchment area.
5. Children attending one of the National Schools in the catchment area and residing outside the catchment area.
6. All other applicants.

If the numbers of any category exceed the number of available places, priority will be given to pupils to whom Athboy Community School is the closest post primary school.

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:

A lottery will be scheduled for places for intake in September 2025.

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; other than the Transition Year fee
- (c) A student's academic ability, skills or aptitudes; (other than in relation to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special needs concerned),
- (d) The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitudes 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 wishign to include criteria based on the sibling of a student attending or having attended the school)
- (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 admissions notice of the school for the school year concerned.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Athboy Community School 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 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 Athboy Community 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 Athboy Community 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.

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 Athboy Community 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 Athboy Community 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.

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:

The following considerations and procedures will apply:

Pupils applying for transfer from another school, or who apply after the commencement of the school year, must complete an additional application form; the reasons for the transfer must be clearly stated in an accompanying covering letter; and two recent school reports must be furnished where the applicant has been attending a school.

Transfers from other second-level schools are presented to the Principal in order of priority based on the criteria in Section 6.

Pupils who apply for entry into Athboy Community School after the start of the school year will be offered places, notwithstanding any waiting list that may exist or have existed for that school year, according to the following:

- School Admissions Policy
- Receipt of complete information from the students current/former school concerning attendance, educational progress, disciplinary record and, where relevant, disabilities or special needs.
- Consideration of the effect of the transfer on the student and his/her best interests.
- Consideration of the effect of the transfer on the order, discipline and educational welfare of existing students.
- Availability of the applicant's chosen subjects.
- DES guidelines with regard to class size of those subjects.

If there is no place in the year group, the application will be placed on a waiting list until May 31st of that academic year.

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

The board of Athboy Community 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

Athboy Community School offers *Religious Education* in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, *Religious Education* supports the 'multi-denominational' aspect of our school's ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between '*Religious Education*' and '*Religious Instruction*':

- *Religious Education* is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
- *Religious Instruction* is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

18. Additional Educational Needs

Athboy Community School welcomes pupils with special educational needs and operates an Additional Educational Needs Policy. The school will use the financial and personnel resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs. It will endeavour to ensure that these students are free to participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonably possible. In line with the Additional Educational Needs Policy, the school will liaise with feeder schools in order to access information relevant to providing for the needs of students with special educational needs.

It is expected of all parents that they will facilitate the provision for special educational needs where the school authorities deem this is necessary.

Athboy Community 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.

Athboy Community 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.

19. Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (See Appendix B)

20. Transition Year (See Appendix C)

21. Entry to the Special Needs Unit for Autism – (See Appendix D)

22. Repeating a Year

Consideration will only be given to pupils wishing to repeat a year in exceptional circumstances and for reasons acceptable to the Department of Education and Science as set out in circular letters M57/87, M33/89, M47/93 and M2/95. Pupils who wish to repeat a year will be required to complete an Application Form. Such applications are presented to the Principal in order of priority based on the criteria in Section 6.

23. 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 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, 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 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.

Date ratified by Board of Management: _____

Signed by Chair of the Board of Management: _____

Appendix B - Leaving Certificate Applied Programme

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is optional. All students wishing to follow the LCA Programme must complete an application form. Students will be interviewed with one or two parents/ guardians. Successful candidates will be informed in writing. Because of the limited nature of resources it may not be possible to accept all students that apply for Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). In such circumstances the following limits and criteria will apply, in the following order:

1. Class size of no more than twenty students should be adhered to as far as possible in order to ensure the level of support required for this programme.
2. Students should show a good level of interest in and commitment to the LCA Programme.
3. Students applying for the L.C.A. Programme will be interviewed by a panel of three of the LCA Coordinator and Principal or Deputy Principal or one other teacher (ensuring gender balance) in order to ascertain their suitability for the course.
4. Criteria used will include: attendance, punctuality, wearing of full uniform, behaviour in class and at extra-curricular activities, ability to meet deadlines, ability to self-motivate, ability to cooperate in a work experience environment and the suitability of the programme to student's aptitude and ability.
5. External students may apply for entry to the Leaving Certificate Applied Class only when places have not been filled by students who have been enrolled in the school for their Junior Cycle education.

Appendix C - Transition Year Admissions Policy

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Athboy Community School offers Transition Year as an optional one-year programme post Junior Certificate.

The aims of the Transition Year Programme reflect those specific to the guidelines published by the Department of Education and Skills, namely:

- Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.
- The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with the emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.
- Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.
- Athboy Community School endeavours to ensure that all students, including those with special educational needs, have equity of access to the Transition Year Programme.

2. PROCEDURES

The number of TY classes will depend on demand in any given year.

An information evening for Parents and information seminars for students are held in the spring time of the year of entry. The school actively promotes the Transition Year Programme as an excellent option for students to mature personally and improve academic attainment in senior cycle.

Transition Year applications are supplied by and returned to the Transition Year Coordinator.

Acceptance of the application form does not confirm a place on the programme.

External applicants fill in the enrolment application form for Athboy Community School as new entrants and such students who meet the criteria can fill out an application form for TY. Priority is given to students who have completed their Junior Cycle education in the school.

The TY Coordinator will consult with teachers, year heads and the LCA Coordinator with respect to the TY Applications list.

Applicants will be interviewed by two members of the TY Selection Committee.

Applicants with special educational needs will be provided with additional preparatory support, as required, including access to a communication/support partner if deemed necessary for interview.

Final Selection will take place at a meeting of the Selection Committee. Composition from: TY Coordinator, Year Head-3rd Year, Guidance Counsellor, TY Teachers, Principal, Deputy Principal.

Following interview, a short list of suitable applicants, in order of merit, will be drafted taking into consideration the admissions criteria.

Where the number of shortlisted students is above the maximum allowed the shortlisted applicants will be offered a place on the TY programme in multiples of 24. The remaining shortlisted suitable candidates will be offered places in order of merit, where they become available.

Parents/Guardians may appeal the decision of the selection committee to the Board of Management if so desired.

3. ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

The following criteria will help ascertain suitability:

- Level of serious commitment indicated by the student in the application process.
- Level of serious commitment indicated by the student at interview.
- Track record of involvement in school life, in school leadership or in activities outside of school.
- Willingness to participate in all elements of the TY Programme both school based and external.
- The student's satisfactory attendance record in school.
- What contribution the applicant can make to the TY programme.
- The student's age and/or pastoral needs as communicated by the Year Head, Guidance Counsellor and/or other professionals in the school.

Successful applicants will be required to pay a fee to cover the additional expenses arising from their participation in the programme and to organise their own work placements.

A Transition Year student who does not actively participate or jeopardises the programme may be offered a place in the Traditional 5th Year Programme for the current or subsequent year.

Appendix D – Admission to an ASD Special Class (An Cuan)

1. Background

Athboy Community School is a co-educational multi-denominational Community School operating under the patronage of the Archdiocese of Meath and Meath Louth Education and Training Board.

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the

Education (Admissions to schools) Act 2018, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

This policy must be read in conjunction with and is part of the overall Student Admissions Policy for Athboy Community School.

The Special Classes for students with Autism are funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The Board of Management of the school has the responsibility for the ongoing management of the Special Classes, having regard to the funding, resources, services and space available.

1.1 Aims

The aim of Athboy Community School is to offer a kind and caring educational experience which supports the wellbeing and the academic, spiritual and creative growth of every student.

The aim of the Special Classes are to offer a specific learning environment within a mainstream post-primary school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream educational activities that are available and that are deemed appropriate to the ongoing education of the student.

After a period of time observing, assessing and inter-acting with the student, a Student Support Plan will be developed following consultation with parents/guardians and with other relevant professional staff (e.g. NEPS psychologist, coordinator/teacher(s) of Special Educational Needs/Autism, occupational therapist, school principal/deputy principal etc), as deemed appropriate.

1.2 External Support Services

Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). These services include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy. The Board of Management at Athboy Community School has no function in accessing these services, but merely acts as a relevant conduit for their provision, where available and possible. Furthermore, Athboy Community School cannot guarantee any additional service or support that may be available to the student through the offices of the HSE. Athboy Community School does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is a matter for the parents/guardians alone to ensure that all such possible support services are being accessed and availed of.

1.3 Pre-enrolment Criteria

All applicants must have;

An assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-V and FCD 10 (DSM and FCD are the criteria used by health professionals to diagnose Autism). All applications must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by an educational/clinical psychologist, psychiatrist or from a multi-disciplinary team (clinical psychologist, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, social worker, and/or physiotherapist).

The report must recommend placement in an Autism specific class in an ASD Special

Class/Unit for the applicant. The report should have been issued within two years of the application to the school.

The report must specify that the applicant has complex needs.

All applications in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team, made up of the SEN Coordinator, the Special Class Coordinator, the deputy principal and the principal. The withholding of such reports from the school may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.

Parents/guardians should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in the three special classes at Athboy Community School is six students in each class.

It should be noted that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily guarantee the student a place in the ASD Class.

The Board of Management require that parents/guardians must accept that the enrolment process only proceeds where the educational and physical needs of the applicants as identified can be met within the ASD Class.

The parents/guardians of the applicant must accept and agree to Athboy Community School Behaviour Code and the terms of this policy.

The Special Class at Athboy Community School will only cater for children who are 12 years or more, and less than 18 years of age, on 1st of September of the school year in question.

1.4 Enrolment

All applications for enrolment in the Special Classes will be considered within the context of the school's Admission Policy. Where the Special Classes in Athboy Community School are not oversubscribed, all students whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the Special Classes will be offered a place in the Special Class, subject to the Admissions Policy.

1.5. Oversubscription

Priority will be given to students as per the criteria mentioned in 1.8 below.

1.6 The Catchment Area

The catchment area for Athboy Community School is defined as the area in the Catchment Area Map in Appendix 1.

Applications to enrol a student in the Special Class will only be considered in the year of entry of the applicant to Athboy Community School, ie, for September 2024 enrolment,

we will process applications from the November 2023 enrolment period.

1.7 Application Process

The process begins with a referral from a feeder school, an external agency or a telephone call or a visit in person to Athboy Community School by a parent/guardian.

An Application Form, a copy of which is available from the school or on the website, should be fully completed and submitted by the parent/guardian on behalf of the applicant. The closing date for receipt of such completed applications by the school is at the end of October in the year prior to enrolment. Parent/Guardians seeking a place in the special class should clearly state this on the enrolment application form. Parents/Guardians should note that the application process for placements in the Special Class differs to that for student applications for enrolment in mainstream classes.

All parents will receive a letter two weeks after the closing date of the enrolment period acknowledging receipt of the initial application form and requesting additional documentation. Parents/guardians seeking a place in the special class will be requested to complete a longer Enrolment Application Form which should be accompanied by an original birth certificate of the applicant and accompanied by all the up to date and pertinent educational psychological assessments(s) and diagnostic report (s). The Enrolment Application form must also be accompanied by school reports and relevant documented information from all previous schools that the applicant attended.

There must be signed consent from a parent/guardian granting the Board of Management of Athboy Community School permission to access and share any other reports relevant to the application.

Fully completed Enrolment Application Forms are then recorded in the school applications file. Entry on to the Athboy Community School applications file secures a place on the list of applicants only. Only applications that then meet the criteria for enrolment, subject to available space and maximum student numbers, will be considered.

Two of the following original documents, as proof of address within the catchment area must accompany the application for enrolment - ESB (or alternative provider) bill, gas bill, landline telephone bill or television supplier bill.

The advice, support and recommendation of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for the area/region, based on the needs of the applicants, will be considered in the decision- making process associated with enrolment of applicants in the Special Class at Athboy Community School.

It is important that parents/guardians note that Athboy Community School may in certain clarified circumstances, and following an assessment and investigation, be unable to meet the special educational or physical needs of the applicant on the grounds that;

- i. the applicant is deemed a risk, on health, safety, welfare or security grounds to themselves and/or other, or
- ii. admission of the applicant will make impossible, or have a serious detrimental effect on, the education provision by Athboy Community School as an educational establishment of its services to others.

All recommendations will then be considered by the Enrolment Team. The principal will make the final school decisions on all applications to enrol.

1.8 Criteria for Enrolment in the Case of Oversubscription

Where the number of applicants on the applications file exceeds the number of places available, the following ranked criteria will then apply in this order to all applications received:

1. Applicants already enrolled within mainstream classes or who have been accepted to a mainstream place in Athboy Community School and who meet the criteria for placement in the Special Class as outlined in 1.3 above.
2. Applicants with siblings already enrolled in Athboy Community School, and in attendance at the school during the enrolment period (May to September of the year of application) who reside in the catchment area as defined by the Dept of Education.
3. Applicants residing in the catchment area.
4. Applicants who are children of school staff.
5. Applicants with siblings already enrolled in Athboy Community School, and in attendance at the school during the enrolment period (May to September of the year of application) who do not reside in the catchment area as defined by the Dept of Education.
6. Applicants attending one of the National schools in the catchment area and residing outside the catchment area.
7. All other applicants.

Parents/Guardians should note that where the number of applicants at any stage of the criteria numbered above exceeds the number of spaces available within that criterion, Athboy Community School will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

1.9 Dual Enrolment

All students in the Special Class are automatically eligible to a place in the mainstream year groups appropriate to their age/level of education reached. This will allow students the flexibility of joining a mainstream class where it is determined by staff and

parents/guardians that they should do so.

1.10 The Transition from Primary to Post Primary

Parents/Guardians should note;

- a. The parents/guardians of a child being offered a place in s Special Class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Education Team and the Principal/Deputy Principal of the school, to discuss the placement/enrolment of their child. Any information requested by the parent/guardian will be provided at this meeting.
- b. The parents/guardians may be requested to consent to a visit by a member of the Special Educational Needs professional staff at Athboy Community School, to visit the existing school placement of the student concerned in order to observe the student in a classroom situation.
- c. The parents/guardians will be invited to accompany their child to visit Athboy Community School Special Class and meet staff.
- d. The Parents/ Guardians are also invited, after the acceptance and placement of their child in the Special Class, to be consulted about the Education Plan for their child.
- e. The NEPS psychologist and SENO will be appraised of the Student Support Plan
- f. A child may be phased gradually into the special class through a mutually agreed process between parents/guardians and the management of the school.
- g. Where it is deemed appropriate, a student in the Special Class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purpose by school management.

1.11 Transfer from Other Schools

Students enrolled in a Special Class in another post-primary school applying for transfer enrolment to Athboy Community School Special Class at the end of a school academic year will be placed on a waiting list, if they meet the criteria listed above.

Students who are currently enrolled in a Special Class in another post-primary school applying for transfer enrolment to Athboy Community School Special Class during the academic year, will be placed on a waiting list if they meet the criteria outlined above.

Parents/Guardians must note the Athboy Community School respects the right of the existing school community and the students already enrolled therein, and this consideration is paramount when assessing entry to the Special Class.

1.12 Review of Placements

The placement of every student within a Special Class will be subject to regular review by the school staff and, where appropriate, the professional services external to the

school, following which decision will mean that the student will;

- i. Continue within the Special Class at Athboy Community School
- ii. Integrate fully into the mainstream post-primary, or
- iii. Seek an alternative and more appropriate educational placement for the student as Athboy Community School is unable to meet the educational needs of the student. In such an instance the support and assistance of the staff at Athboy Community School will be available to assist the family in securing a more suitable learning environment in another educational institution, for the student concerned.

1.13 Behaviour

As already indicated above a parents/guardian of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to Athboy Community School Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

Children with special educational needs may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the Student Support Plan. All students including those with special educational needs are subject to the school Learning Code (Behaviour Code) and the terms of the Health and Safety Statement adopted by the Board of

Management at the school. Where any student's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other students in the Special Class, or the students in a mainstream class, to an extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with, as judged by the Board of Management of the school, then the school reserves the right to advise parents/guardians that a more suitable educational setting should be found for their child. The Board of Management of Athboy Community School reserves the right of admission and to refuse to enrol a student, within the terms of this policy.

1.14 Acceptance of a Place

If the student in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the school. The applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form within two weeks of issuing by the school. This includes indicating whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school. Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school within two weeks of issuing by the school, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for withdrawal of an offer as set out below.

1.15 Refusal to Enrol

Where a student in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- i. The reasons that the student was not offered a place in Athboy Community School
- ii. Details of the student's ranking against the published selection criteria
- iii. Details of the student's place on the waiting list, if applicable; and
- iv. Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision.

In addition to the conditions for consideration of an application as set out in the General Admissions Policy, an offer of admission may not be made where the information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect.

1.16 Withdrawal of an Offer

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- i. The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect,
or
- ii. The applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission within two weeks of the offer of a place
or
- iii. An applicant has not indicated whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s); and whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).

If an offer of a place is withdrawn by the school, the student on whose behalf the application was made shall lose his/her place on the admission list or waiting list for that academic year and any subsequent applications for the same academic year on behalf of that student shall be treated as a late application.

2. APPEALS

2.1 Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription

An applicant who was refused admission because the school is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision must submit his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the Board of Management of Athboy Community School at office@Athboycs.ie.

Such an appeal must be brought within 21 calendar days of receipt by the applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit.

However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this policy, same shall apply instead.

If an applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the Board of Management, or the Board of Management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

2.2 Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription

An applicant who was refused admission to Athboy Community School for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may choose to put his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the Board of Management of Athboy Community School. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this policy, same shall apply instead. Alternatively, s/he may choose to apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998. If an Applicant who chooses to appeal to the Board of Management is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, the Applicant may also apply to bring an appeal to an Appeals Committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

2.3 Basis for Appeal

As required by section 29C(2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admission Policy, the content of the school's Admission Notice and also set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.

This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Management of the Athboy Community School.

Signed:

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

