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Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Admissions Policy (the 'Policy') for St Paul's National School (the 'School') has been devised in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Equal Status legislation, the relevant sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, directives of the School's Patron and following consultation with the School community.
- 1.2 In this Policy, any reference to 'parents' is to be taken as including reference to guardians, any reference to 'child' is to be taken to include a child who has been adopted or fostered, any reference to 'siblings' is to be taken as including reference to step siblings and foster siblings.

2. General Information

- 2.1 While recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in a school of their choice, the Board of Management (the 'Board') reserves the right to determine maximum school and class size capacity, in order to ensure the safety and educational needs of students.
- 2.2 In determining the level of admissions, the Board shall take account of Department of Education & Skills ('DES') regulations/circulars in relation to staffing, class size and pupil teacher ratios and health and safety requirements. The Board of Management will in the light of sections 6(e), 9(m) and (15) (2) (d), of the Education Act 1998 give consideration to issues such as physical space, the size of classrooms/play areas/school premises, the number of pupils expected to leave the school, multi-grade classes, the effect of the intake on division/pairing of classes, the presence of pupils with special educational and/or behavioural needs, the deployment of teachers and the resources of the School.
- 2.3 As per 2.1 and 2.2 above, the Board of Management has determined that there will be a maximum of twenty pupils per classroom where this is possible and practicable and a total enrolment of no more than forty pupils. Within the multi-class setting, the Board seeks to have a balance of 5 pupils per class and where this is exceeded to reclaim the balance within the room in future enrolment where this is both possible and practicable. This is to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, to facilitate the teaching of four

classes in each classroom and to ensure that the classrooms are safe, workable environments.

3. Notification of Intention to Apply Form

- 3.1 Those intending to apply for enrolment of a student in the School (the “Intending Applicant”) should contact the School and request a copy of the Notification of Intention to Apply Form. Submission of the Notification of Intention to Apply Form does not offer any priority whatsoever to the Intending Applicant nor does it in any way guarantee a place for him/her either for the term and year requested nor for any other term or year.
- 3.2 If the intention is to seek to enrol a child in less than 21 days, an Application Form should be requested and there will have to be full compliance with this Policy in terms of the application.
- 3.3 Those who have returned a Notification of Intention to Apply Form will be sent an Application Form in the proposed year of proposed enrolment in the School.

4. Applications for Admissions

- 4.1 All applications for a place in the School shall be submitted to the School Principal on the School Application Form. An Enrolment Pack including the Ethos Statement, Admissions Policy, Code of Behaviour, Attendance Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement, Administration of Medication Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, RSE Policy, Stay Safe Policy and Communication and Complaint Policy will be made available to each Applicant with a copy of the Application Form at the appropriate time.
- 4.2 The application form must be submitted during the Admissions Application period i.e. between 9.00 am on Tuesday 26th February 2019 and 3.00 pm on Friday 22ⁿ March 2019.
- 4.3 The School will not accept applications in advance of 9.00 am on Tuesday 26th February 2019 or after 3.00 pm on Friday 22nd March 2019.
- 4.4 The strict deadline for receipt of fully completed Application forms is 3.00 pm on Friday 22nd March 2019. (the ‘closing date’).
- 4.5 Only those Application Forms that have been completed in full, signed, dated, accompanied by requested supporting documentation and submitted by the closing date will be considered by the Board. In order for an application to be considered, all requested accompanying documentation must be provided prior to the closing date. It is the Applicant’s sole responsibility to ensure all requested supporting documentation is submitted with the application.
- 4.6 An Application Form must be accompanied by:
 - (i) A birth certificate for the student in respect to whom the application has been made (the “Applicant Student”)
 - (ii) Proof of address in the form of a utility bill in the Applicant Parent/Guardian’s name. This must be dated within 3 months of the closing date. This address must be the address at which the child resides.

- (iii) Statement confirming that the Applicant Student is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or another minority religion which has the same ethos or a similar ethos to that of the Church of Ireland.
 - (iii) Evidence to confirm and support that the Applicant Student is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or another minority religion which has the same ethos or a similar ethos to that of the Church of Ireland. Such evidence generally consists of
 - a baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptized as a member of the minority religion *or*
 - a letter from the relevant church leader confirming that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion *or*
 - the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion.
- 4.7 It should be noted that submission of an Application Form does not confer a right to admission nor does it guarantee a place in the School.
- 4.8 Submitting inaccurate information on an Application Form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void ab initio. Where a place has been offered, this will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn, the place being reallocated and the Applicant Student being placed last on the waiting list.
- 4.9 Submission of the Application Form early in the Admissions Application period is not a factor in the allocation of places in the School. If an application is submitted prior to the Admissions Application Period, the application will not be considered by the Board.
- 4.10 Applicant Students, in respect of whom applications are made for junior infants, must have attained their 4th birthday by the 30th April in respect of the year for which the application for enrolment is made and must be fully toilet-trained.

5. Consideration of the Applications

- 5.1 The Board having considered the applications, will issue its decisions in writing within 21 days of the closing date.
- 5.2 Waiting lists for Applicant Students only apply for the school year in respect of which the application for enrolment was made and do not carry forward to subsequent years.
- 5.3 Applicants who have been offered a place, and wish to accept, must inform the School in writing within 21 calendar days of the date on the offer letter. Failure to do so within this timeframe will result in the place being forfeited and being reallocated.
- 5.4 It is a condition of enrolment that parents/guardians accept the school's Code of Behaviour, Admissions Policy and Ethos Statement by signing the relevant form included in the Enrolment Pack as acknowledgement of the acceptance of these policies.
- 5.5 Applications are not encouraged in the course of the school year except in the exceptional circumstances where a child has moved to the area and does not have access to a school within the locality.
- 5.6 Any contact with and/or lobbying of school personnel and/or board members regarding an application for admission will automatically disqualify the applicant and a place will not be offered.
- 5.7 The foregoing conditions are subject to internal review from time to time and may be changed pursuant to other factors including DES/Patron requirements, changes in

legislation etc.

6. Registration

6.1 Successful applicants will be advised in writing of the offer of a place and are asked to accept the place by completion of the Registration Form within the specified time frame.

6.2 Signed acceptance of the Admissions Policy, Code of Behaviour and the Ethos Statement is required in acceptance of the offered place.

6.3 It should be ensured that the following information is included with your Registration form:

- Contact numbers
- Details of any medical conditions and allergies which the prospective pupil may have and details of medication (if any) presently being taken in line with 'The Administration of Medication Policy'
- Applicant Students with Special Needs must submit medical/psychological reports in order that all necessary supports or adjustments can either be applied for to the relevant bodies or be put in place prior to the arrival of the pupil in the school
- Whether or not the applicant student will require language support
- Where relevant, copies of court orders relating to guardianship or other relevant matters
- Completed Primary Online Database (POD) form

7. Priority

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

- (a) **Priority Category 1:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of another minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in St Paul's N.S. and who lives within the boundary of the Mountmellick Group of Parishes.
- (b) **Priority Category 2:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland, or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of another minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school and who lives no more than 5km outside the boundary of the Mountmellick Group of Parishes.
- (c) **Priority Category 3:** All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy.

7.2 In respect of Priority categories 1 and 2 above, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the Board of Management of St Paul's N.S. must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and that St Paul's N.S. provides a programme of religious instruction which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to , the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

- (i) a statement from the Applicant confirming (i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student

And

- (ii) evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the Church of Ireland, or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of another minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos. This evidence will consist of:

- a letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or another minority religion which has the same ethos or a similar ethos to that of the Church of Ireland. or
- the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or another minority religion which has the same ethos or a similar ethos to that of the Church of Ireland. or
- a baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptised as a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or another minority religion which has the same ethos or a similar ethos to that of the Church of Ireland.

7.3 It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the priority category to Applicant Students who have siblings currently enrolled in the school ('Sibling Applicant Students'). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category, exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system. If a lottery system is used in the case of oversubscription, the relevant applicants will be invited to attend the lottery as witnesses where the names will be drawn by the Chairperson. Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category, does not exceed the number of places available, the remaining places in this category will be allocated using a lottery system; the relevant applicants will be invited to attend the lottery as witnesses where the names will be drawn by the Chairperson.

Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student place on the waiting list as it applies in the particular priority category.

8. Refusal to Enrol

- 8.1 The School reserves the right to refuse enrolment where an Applicant does not comply with the terms of this Policy.
- 8.2 In exceptional circumstances, the School reserves the right to refuse enrolment where:
- i. The Applicant Student has special needs such that, even with additional resources being made available from the DES/NCSE, the School cannot meet such needs and/or provide the Applicant Student with an appropriate education;
 - ii. The Applicant Student poses unacceptable risk(s) to other pupils, staff and/or school property.
- 8.3 Applicants refused under any of the above criteria will be advised of their right to appeal the Board's decision as outlined below.

9. Appeals Procedure

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

10. Ratification and Review

- 10.1 This Enrolment Policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board and follows guidelines issued by the Patron in respect of admissions.

Policy Ratified on: _____

Signed by: _____
(Chairperson)

Dated: _____