

Admission Policy of St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children

Douglas, Cork. T12WK3D

Roll number: 055080

**School Patron: Bishop Fintan Gavin
Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross**

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 in September, 2020. 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 St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children'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

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children is a Catholic all girls primary school with a facility for Deaf boys and girls. The school has a Catholic ethos and is under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork and Ross.

"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, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; 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 where 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 St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children 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.

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children is dedicated to the missionary vision of St Columba - to foster a love of learning and a spirit of mutual respect within the school community. St Columba's also aims to foster a sense of personal responsibility and wellbeing within a moral, spiritual and social framework which reflects Christian values. Our school's approach to learning aims to foster positive behaviour patterns which nurture children's confidence and self-esteem as well as tolerance and respect for the rights and dignity of others.

3. Admission Statement

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children 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
- (j) St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children 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.

- (k) St Columba's GNS with Facility 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.

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.

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children is an all girls school with a facility for deaf children and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to the mainstream section of this school.

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children 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 Catholic denomination and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, 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 special class

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established classes to provide an education exclusively for students with hearing impairments. We are committed to the principle of inclusion.

Such students have a hearing disability that is so serious as to prevent them from participating fully in mainstream classroom interaction and from benefiting adequately from school instruction in a mainstream setting.

The special classes cater for students whose degree of deafness generally ranges from the lower end of moderate to severe and profound.

The teaching in the special classes follows a bilingual policy of communication whereby equal recognition is given to both Irish Sign Language (ISL) and English.

The classes range from Early intervention to Sixth Class.

The Board will make reasonable provision and accommodation for students presenting with other special needs in addition to hearing impairment. A copy of any available reports may be required in order to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs relevant to the student's special needs and to profile the support services required in meeting these needs. Where such reports are not available the Board of Management will advise that the child be assessed immediately. Following receipt of appropriate assessment reports, the principal will meet with the parents/ guardians of the student to discuss the

child's educational and training needs and the school's suitability or capability to meet these needs. If necessary, a full case conference will be convened involving all professional agencies involved with the student to make recommendations regarding an appropriate placement.

If difficulties present subsequent to the student's enrolment, the school may review its capacity to provide the best possible education for the student and its capacity to cater for the student's individual needs. This review will include the input from all the relevant bodies.

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 or guardian 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
- c) *The child has not reached her fourth birthday before May 1st in the year for which she is applying (an exception to this is an application for a child to enrol in the Early Intervention Class in the Deaf Unit where she can apply to enter when she is three before October 31st on the year of entry)*

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school. The facility for deaf children provides education for boys and girls

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special classes attached to St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children provide an education exclusively for students with hearing impairments 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 these classes.

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 (timestamped) as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

1. Siblings and step siblings of present pupils.
2. Siblings and step siblings of past pupils who are living within the parish boundaries
3. Siblings and step siblings of pupils attending St Columba's Boys NS
4. Children of staff members in St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children.
5. Children residing within the parish boundaries
6. Children of staff members in St Columba's BNS
7. Children of past pupils not residing within the parish boundaries
8. Children residing outside the parish boundaries

In the event that applications to the Deaf Unit exceed the number of places the Board of Management will use its discretion in applying the following criteria:

- *Degree of hearing loss.*
- *Children whose main disability is Hearing Impairment and whose need can only be met in St Columba's Facility for Deaf Children will be offered a place before children whose main need is other than Hearing Impairment and who could have access to another school which could cater for the children's main disability.*

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:

There will be a lottery between the students tied for the place or places. This will be supervised by members of the Board of Management The decision will be made by allocating the place to the student whose address is nearest to the reception area of the school as per electronic mapping.

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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools.

- (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 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) 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 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children will be based on the following:

- The 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 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 which 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 the 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 St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children, 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 St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children 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 school 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 St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children 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 St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application (timestamped)

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 working 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 will be accepted for students to enter classes other than the school's intake group subject to there being available places. The Board of Management asks that information concerning each student's attendance and educational progress be communicated between schools.

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 will be accepted for students to enter classes other than the school's intake group and after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought subject to there being available places. The Board of Management asks that information concerning each student's attendance and educational progress be communicated between schools.

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

The board of St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children, 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 have 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:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. Withdrawal from the classroom is not an option.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent 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.

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.