**Admissions Policy**

**Introduction**

St. Paul’s Primary School is a co-educational, vertical primary school in inner city Dublin. This policy sets out the admissions policy implemented by the Board of Management in accordance with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Admission to Schools) Act, 2018.

**Mission Statement**

St. Paul’s CBS Primary School is under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin and is Roman Catholic in ethos. The aim of our school is to provide happy and stimulating learning experiences in a safe, secure and supportive environment for our children, taking into account the social, physical, emotional, creative and spiritual well being of each child, at the same time cultivating good habits, respect for each other, for the school and the environment.

We recognise that many of the children in our school come from a variety of faith traditions and we welcome children of all faiths and none, respecting and valuing the diverse beliefs of our community.

**Rationale and Aims**

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school

* To make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with the ethos, the mission statement of the school and legislative requirements
* To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available
* To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between children, parents, carers and teachers where a child is admitted to the school
* To ensure the school is compliant with its legal obligations as specified in the Education Act 1998, and the Education (Admission to Schools) Act, 2018, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

**Context, Resources, School Organisation & Curriculum**

Our school is a DEIS Band 1 vertical primary school in inner city Dublin, catering for children typically aged 7-12. Our school community is committed to ensuring equality for all children regarding access to and participation in the school. We respect the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in our community and acknowledge the right of parents/carers to send their children to a school of their choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of any applicant.

The principal is responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of the school, alongside the deputy principal and a team of teachers who have a variety of middle leadership roles and responsibility for different aspects of the curriculum. There is a full-time teacher for every class from 2nd to 6th Class. Other teachers work as support teachers for children with additional needs, e.g. those with English as an additional language or children with special education needs. These teachers may work alongside the class teachers or take smaller groups or individuals for targeted support teaching.

We have a shared Home School Community Liaison teacher who works in partnership with families to support good attendance and engagement with school life and to offer help or advice to families who need it.  We have several Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) in school to support children with their learning. They may support individual children or groups of children or provide general help in classrooms and around the school.

The school is funded by the Department of Education and follows the national primary curriculum.

**Enrolment Procedure**

The registration process is initiated on receipt of a completed application form by the school. This form must be signed and dated by one or both parents or carers. The form will be date stamped on receipt by the school, and is attached as Appendix 1 to this policy. Telephone calls, emails or school visits to discuss enrolment may be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.

The date of application, the child's date of birth, address and contact details are recorded on our online record of applications on the school’s management information system, Aladdin. The attached acknowledgement (Appendix 2) together with a copy of this policy will be provided to the applicant. The acknowledgement of an application merely confirms that it will be assessed under the criteria outlined, and does not confer any further status on that application.

Entry in the school record of applications means that an application will be considered in early February of the relevant enrolment year, and will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria outlined in this policy. Where applicable, requests in respect of guardianship, custody and access arrangements on behalf of parents/carers should be supported by a written letter from a solicitor or the Courts.

Following this evaluation, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board, listing proposed enrolments for the forthcoming year. Once an enrolment list is approved by the Board, all applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome, and if refused admission will be notified of their entitlement to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

At this stage, further information on a longer enrolment form will be requested to complete the application process. We will also request a copy of the child’s birth certificate and proof of address. The application will not be treated as complete until all of the requested information is received. Once the school is in receipt of this information, the application will be complete and the Board of Management will communicate a decision on the application within 21 days.

**Please note:**

Applications for admission to Second Class must be made at the very latest by the end of January of the year in which it is expected that the child will start school.

**Enrolment Criteria**

In the event that applications for enrolment exceed or are expected to exceed the number of places available, the Board of Management will apply the following criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Criterion** |
| **1** | Brothers of children in the school. |
| **2** | Children living within the parish boundary. |
| **3** | Children of current staff, including ancillary staff. |
| **4** | Children living outside the parish boundary. |

## ***In the event that there are more applicants within any category than there are available places, priority will be given to children within the particular category, in order of age, starting with the oldest.***

Children who do not receive a place will be allocated a numbered space on the waiting list, based on the criteria above. Parents/carers will be asked to confirm in writing that they wish to remain on the waiting list and any arising places will be allocated accordingly. Any applications received after the closing date in January will be offered a subsequent place on the waiting list.

## **Decision Making**

The Board of Management are the decision makers in relation to applications for enrolment. The Board will notify parents/carers of their decision within 21 days. As a general principle and in so far as is practicable having regard to the school’s enrolment policy, children will be enrolled on application provided there is space available.

The Board will take into account any relevant Department of Education guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and for any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and health and welfare of children.

## **Enrolment of children with Special Educational Needs**

Our application form includes a section for parents/carers to inform us of any additional needs a child might have. As part of our enrolment procedures, the school will request a copy of the child’s medical or psychological report or where such a report is not available, will request that the child be assessed as early as possible. This will allow us to assess the level of support the child may require at school and to ensure we can meet the child’s needs.

If necessary, prior to enrolment, we may apply for additional resources from the National Council for Special Education or the Department of Education to ensure we have adequate support in place to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and / or medical report. We may also meet with the parents/carers to discuss a child’s individual needs and our suitability or capability to meet those needs.

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment in rare and exceptional circumstances where, for example,

* the pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education or
* in the opinion of the Board, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.

It is the right of a parent/carer to appeal the decision of the Board of Management.

**Criteria for Enrolment to Senior Infants to 6th Classes**

The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for available places in classes from Senior Infants to 6th Class.

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| --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Criterion** |
| **1** | Brothers of children in the school. |
| **2** | Children living within the parish boundary. |
| **3** | Children of current staff, including ancillary staff. |
| **4** | Children living outside the parish boundary. |

## **Children Transferring**

Children may transfer to the school at any time provided a letter of transfer has been received from the previous school. This will be subject to school policy, available space, presence of children with special educational / behavioural needs, multi-grade classes, DES maximum class sizes and in some cases approval of the Department of Education in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000. Once the child is registered, the Principal will send a letter of transfer to the child’s previous school to request any relevant information concerning attendance or the child’s educational progress.

All children enrolled are expected to comply with and support the school's Code of Behaviour, as well as the school's designated policies on Curriculum, Organisation and Management.

**Equality of Opportunity**

The Board of Management of St. Paul’s Primary School reserves the right of admission if such admissions contravene Department of Education guidelines on class size, etc. We will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, special education needs, disability, traveller status, refugee status, political or religious beliefs, family or social circumstances, provided the necessary supports are in place in the school.

**Right of Appeal**

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 provides for a right of appeal against a decision to refuse enrolment. Parents and carers will be informed by the Principal, in writing, of a decision to refuse enrolment and in this letter, they will be informed of their right to appeal. The Board of Management will prepare a response for any Appeals Committee if and when an appeal is initiated.

**Evaluation**

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the policy and review and amend the Policy as required, with particular emphasis placed upon

* Effective management placed on application process
* Clarity and transparency relating to the process
* Applicants informed in good time regarding the status of their application, particularly in the case of refusal to enrol
* Positive parental feedback

**Monitoring Procedures**

The implementation of our policy will be monitored by the Board of Management each year. The Principal will report to the Board of Management regarding the process of enrolment in December each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete. Where the Principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated by the Board in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

**Review Procedure**

The policy was reviewed in light of the new legislation in October 2018 and will be reviewed bi-annually.