

ADMISSIONS POLICY (2019/20)



St. Aidan's C.B.S., Whitehall, Dublin 9

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INTRODUCTION

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for boys operating under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (E.R.S.T.). The five characteristics of an E.R.S.T. school underpin the operation of our school, namely:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community;
- Excelling in teaching and learning;
- Creating a caring school community;
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

MISSION STATEMENT and CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT

The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the E.R.S.T. Charter. This is reflected in the operations of our school. Below, we have outlined some examples of how this characteristic spirit can be identified in day to day school life.

By nurturing faith: St. Aidan's C.B.S., in partnership with the home and the parish, is dedicated to providing and developing a Catholic education that cultivates a living faith, fosters Christian spirituality and educates people in Gospel-based values of faith in the school community.

School life: Students in our school participate in the state Religious Education programme. This is inclusive of students of all faiths and those of no faith. As a whole school, we gather together in The Church of the Holy Child to celebrate at the beginning of the school year. Events, which seek to cultivate a living faith, are also organised by the Religion Department during Catholic Schools Week.

By promoting partnership: St. Aidan's C.B.S. recognises the importance of developing positive partnerships with parents/guardians, students and the wider community. We embody the principles of inclusiveness and mutual respect, we respect the earth, we foster a sense of belonging to parish and we promote networking.

School life: Our Parents' Council is actively involved in school life; participating in decision making and providing support. They are also involved in specific school events such as graduation evenings. The views of students are valued and this is particularly apparent with the Students' Council who are invited to communicate with school management. Our school has also acquired Green Flags for litter and waste, water, travel and biodiversity.

By excelling in teaching and learning: We focus on purposeful teaching and learning. We nurture the holistic development of students, recognise the uniqueness of each student, promote personal and professional development, and raise awareness of the interconnectedness of the world in which we live. St. Aidan's CBS uses information technology with critical awareness in an ever-changing world.

School life: Our school, being cognizant of the differing needs, interests and learning styles of students, offers a broad range of subjects and promotes the use of innovative methodologies. School self-evaluation is important to our school. Teachers are encouraged to engage in a process of self-reflection with a view to improving practice to best suit our changing world. The school also supports continuous professional development so as to enhance the educational environment for both teachers and students.

By creating a caring community: St. Aidan's C.B.S. strives to develop a sense of community. It aims to identify and serve the needs of the students through academic and extra-curricular activities. We promote care, respect, and responsibility to all those in the community. We work with local charities in an effort to promote social justice. Our school prides itself on fostering care for the environment; we seek to provide a safe and respectful environment for all partners of the school.

School life: School management, the Care Team and our Special Educational Needs department are heavily involved in organising appropriate resources, curricula and programmes to enable all students to strive towards achieving their potential. Our pastoral care systems, policies and practices seek to develop an environment that is welcoming, includes those who are marginalised, and is free from bullying and harassment. We encourage everyone to take responsibility for the upkeep of the school and the safety of students and staff; through our Green Flags team, corridor and one-way system policies.

By inspiring leadership: St. Aidan's C.B.S. encourages ownership of the vision of the school and ensures that all members of our community share leadership roles. St. Aidan's C.B.S. encourages the active participation of parent/guardians, students, and the wider community in leadership roles. We seek to inspire hearts and minds, raise critical consciousness and cultivate a strong work ethic coupled with an enterprising spirit.

School life: Our school management team is committed to making improvements in our school; through engagement with developments in teaching and learning, improved extra-curricular facilities and supporting innovation and change. With this commitment, leadership is often assigned, delegated, shared, or inspired in others. With regular use of classroom techniques such as assessment for learning and our pastoral care systems and guidance, we encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, development and behaviour.

Within the context of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes, the rights of the Trustees/Board of Management as set out in the Education Act 1998 (Section 15 (1), (2)), and the funding and resources available the school supports the following principles:-

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of students with a disability or other special educational needs
- Equality with respect to maximum access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to choice of school, having regard for the characteristic spirit of the school
- Respect for the diversity of beliefs, languages, traditions and ways of life in society

St. Aidan's C.B.S. Admissions Policy welcomes all students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education. The school aims to provide an integrated and an inclusive education.

Each year the Board of Management decides in advance the number of First Year students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education, having regard to the facilities, personnel, plant and resources. A maximum of **120 boys** will be accommodated in First Year for **September 2019**.

All queries arising from the Admissions Policy may be addressed to Mr. Pat Keating, Chairperson of the Board of Management, St. Aidan's C.B.S., or to Principal/Sec. B.O.M., St. Aidan's C.B.S. Whitehall, Dublin 9.

STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ADMISSION

Students must:

- Have reached the required age of 12 on the 1st January in the calendar year following the child's entry into First Year;
- Have completed Sixth class in Primary School;
- Be willing to accept the school ethos;
- Be willing with parents/guardians to accept school Code of Discipline;
- Be willing to take an Assessment Test.

Criteria for the allocation of places

Places will be allocated to new first year student applicants in the following order of priority:

1. Brothers of present and past pupils;
2. Sons of members of staff of St. Aidan's C.B.S. (with at least three years service on closing date for applications);
3. Boys from the feeder school of Holy Child Boys' National School (B.N.S.), Larkhill (*Boys being admitted from Holy Child B.N.S., Larkhill must have been enrolled in that school from 3rd class onwards prior to entry into St. Aidan's C.B.S.*);
4. Boys living in the Parish of Larkhill/Whitehall;
5. Pupils randomly selected from Our Lady of Victories B.N.S. Ballymun Road, St Fiachra's Senior School Beaumont and St. Patrick's B.N.S., Drumcondra (in no particular order).
6. All other applicants randomly selected.

A waiting list of applicants who are not allocated a place will then be compiled using the criteria as outlined above.

- **A student who is placed on a waiting list is not in any way guaranteed a place in the school.**
- **Exceptional cases will be decided at the discretion of the Board of Management**

SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with special needs:

The school will use the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs to ensure that these students are free to participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonable and practicable. While recognising and fully supporting parents' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply of resources suitable to the needs of the individual student being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board of Management needs to be aware of any special needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed if possible.

In making provision for students with special needs the following information is required.

Has the student had access to any of the following resources:?

1. Special needs assistant or classroom assistant.
2. Special class.
3. Help, for specific needs, from any resource teacher.
4. Assistance with behavioural modification
5. Psychological assessment. Report to be provided.
6. Any additional resources to help with their special needs.
7. Help in areas including, visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or emotional disturbance.
8. Any resource in relation to travel or mobility etc.

If an expert report is provided, it should include a workable strategy for addressing the needs, allowing for the resources available.

The Board of Management, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of students with special needs can be met.

Final confirmation of a place may in exceptional cases be given when the Department of Education and Skills /School confirm in writing that the necessary resources are in place.

N.B. It may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process such applications. Parents are strongly advised to inform the school as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of making application.

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days after a parent has provided the relevant information, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents in writing thereof - Education Welfare Act (Section 19, (3)).

ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

Applications are accepted during late August/early September as the pupil enters his final year in Primary School.

Application forms are sent to the four main primary schools in the area early in September as the pupils enter sixth class.

Application Forms can also be had by calling to or telephoning the School Office.

Final enrolment day is Friday 28th September 2018.

Completed applications must be returned before **2.00p.m. on Friday 28th September 2018.** Completed applications received **after this date will be placed at the end of the waiting list** and will be dealt with on a **first come first served basis.**

Applications require the following documentation:

1. A completed application form
2. A copy of the pupil's birth certificate
3. Two most recent school reports
4. Evidence of permanent address – e.g. two recent utility bills
5. €30 application fee

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days after the deadline for completed applications, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents in writing thereof - Education Welfare Act (Section 19, (3)).

In the case of students with special needs, the Board, having received the relevant information, will make a decision and inform the parents in writing of this decision.

Parents/guardians of successful applicants are requested to pay a non-refundable registration fee of €150 euro.

All successful applicants must sit an **Assessment Test** which normally takes place in **February/early March**. This test is used to assess achievement levels in order to best facilitate students according to their needs.

A meeting of parents of incoming students will be held in **May 2019**. Attendance at this meeting by all parents/guardians is strongly encouraged.

It is a condition of admission that all students must agree in writing to abide by the School Code of Behaviour.

TRANSFER OF A STUDENT FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL

The school will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to our school. The Board of Management will decide on applications for admission to any other year other than First Year by applying the following criteria:

The Board will decide whether or not a transfer

- .. is in agreement with school Admissions Policy
- .. is in the best interest of the student
- .. is in the best interest of the school
- .. is of educational benefit to the student

All relevant information from the former school must be made available. A consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer may be necessary.

Where a student is considered for a place, the decision will be taken by the Board of Management, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians, his former school, and the education welfare officer. The timing of an offer will also be decided by the Board of Management with regard to the stage of the academic year.

All such applications will be considered on an individual basis, subject to the availability of a place at the time of application. Application forms are available from the school office on request. A copy of this Admissions Policy will accompany each application form.

Applicants must meet the school's entry criteria, and furnish a full and honest reason for seeking a placement in St. Aidan's C.B.S.

Applicants must complete the application form, giving all of the details required. Incomplete forms will be returned to Parents/Guardians. Parents/Guardians should sign the application form and date it. Parents/Guardians are required to provide an emergency contact phone number.

Applicants will be required to furnish details about their prior second-level education including copies of their last two school reports that set out the actual results of in-house examinations. Where an applicant has attended more than one second-level school they may be required, at the discretion of the Board, to submit reports from each school. Where appropriate, applicants may be required to submit copies of the results of any state examinations which they have sat.

Applicants are required to submit a reference from their previous school(s). Applicants may be required to complete a further information form regarding their child's educational progress before a place can be offered. Where the school considers it to be necessary an applicant may be required to provide a current education psychological assessment report. Failure to complete any of the necessary documentation listed above or to supply any other relevant documentation requested by the school may result in the board being unable to offer a place to an applicant.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Decisions regarding admissions are a matter for the Board of Management. However, this task is normally delegated to the Principal who decides on such matters in accordance with the school's admission policy.

The school will respond to applications as follows:

- First Year applicants - applications will be considered as soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days after the deadline for applications.
- Students with special needs wishing to enter First Year – applications will be considered as soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days after a parent has provided the relevant information. Closing date for applications still applies. (Please read previous 'Special Needs' section on P.5 of this document).
- Students wishing to transfer from another school – applications will be considered within 21 days of the school receiving the application form. The school may not be in a position to make a decision until later in the school year when its current students have given an indication to the school authorities of their intention to return to the school. In the case of applications for senior cycle courses, this will certainly be the case until the school has surveyed its own students about their preferences for senior cycle. (Please also read previous 'Special Needs' section on P.5 of this document).

A decision will be made in respect of each application following the timing above and the selection criteria set out below and is subject to the class size limitations imposed by the Board of Management for different subject areas and the capacity of the school to provide the academic subjects sought by the student at an appropriate level i.e. higher/ordinary.

Enrolment Criteria: Applicants, must meet any criteria laid down by the Department of Education and Skills from time to time e.g. applicants must not have already spent six years at second-level or apply for a course which would necessarily result in their spending longer than six years at second level.

All students entering the school must supply a Birth Certificate or other appropriate identification as determined by the school (returnable to the parent/guardian), a copy of which will be retained on school files/records.

The behaviour/disciplinary record of a student in their previous school(s) shall be an important factor. The school reserves the right to refuse to admit a student whose behaviour in their previous school has been deemed unsatisfactory, or is a cause for health and safety concerns or where there has not been a satisfactory level of co-operation between the previous school and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The attendance record of a student in their previous school shall also be an important factor.

The availability of suitable places in any given year group shall be of paramount importance and shall be one of the determining factors of admission.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application for admission in exceptional circumstances.

“The Board of Management of a recognised school shall not refuse to admit as a student in such school a child, in respect of whom an application to be so admitted has been made, except where such refusal is in accordance with the policy of the recognised school concerned published under section 15 (2) (d) of the Education Act 1998” (Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (Section 19 (1))).

Should a student’s application for admission to the school be refused the parents/guardians have the right to appeal to the Board of Management in writing. The parents/guardians are informed in writing of the Board’s decision and the reasons why the student was not accepted will be clearly stated. The parents/guardians also have the right to appeal to Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998, Section 29 (d)).

An appeal may be made to **The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, The Appeals Administration Unit, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1**. An appeal should be made in writing on the application form supplied. The Appeals Application Form should be completed in full and should state the following; 1. the decision being appealed, 2. the grounds on which the decision is being appealed, 3. the date that the parents/guardians were informed of the decision. 4. all other relevant information. etc. (Circular M48/01).

Having regard to the desirability of resolving grievances within the school where possible, the parties to an appeal under Section 29, i.e. the appellant and the school’s Board of Management, will be asked to consider the matter in the first instance at local level to see if an accommodation can be reached. As a general rule, appeals will only be considered by an appeals committee under section 29 where the parties are unable to resolve the issue at local level (Circular M48/01).

The school’s Admission Policy is published on the school’s website: staidanscbs.com, and is also available by contacting the school secretary. This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME (L.C.V.P.)

The criteria that will apply in selecting students for L.C.V.P. are as follows:

- Students must be studying subjects in line with the combinations set out by the Department of Education and Skills.
- Students who are not studying a foreign language must attend compulsory language classes run by the school.

TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAMME

The Transition Year (T.Y.) is a one-year programme which comes immediately after completion of the Junior Certificate. The Board of Management will decide the maximum number of students that can be accommodated on the T.Y. Programme. No student is automatically guaranteed a place on this programme. The criteria that will apply in selecting students for T.Y. are as follows:

- 90% attendance in Third Year is essential (in the case of absences, certified illness can be counted towards the 90%)
- A record of positive behaviour is essential. A suspension for serious misbehaviour during Third Year may, in case of exceptional circumstances discount any applicant, as may a series of minor incidents reported by a selection of teachers.
- Punctuality is essential in T.Y. A pupil who has been late regularly for school in junior cycle may not be considered for entry.
- Pupils will need to have shown a willingness to cooperate with teachers, to work to the best of their ability, and to take part in activities outside the classroom.
- Applicants must agree to pay a fee to cover the additional expenses arising from their participation in the programme and to organise their own work placements.

Each applicant is unique. The T.Y. co-ordinator, in considering the criteria above, may interview some students to gather further information. This affords students the opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the programme.

Should a student's application for admission to T.Y. be refused the parents/guardians can contact the T.Y. co-ordinator who will organise a meeting to outline the reasons for the decision. If an agreement has not been made, the parents/guardian can appeal to the Board of Management in writing.

RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on Wednesday 14th of March 2018 and was agreed for publication by the Edmund Rice Schools Trust.

REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

This policy has been drawn up by the Board of Management and the Planning Co-ordinator in consultation with staff, parents and representatives from our feeder schools. We are committed to the review and development of our school policies and this policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually. It will be examined to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.