

# ADMISSIONS POLICY (2020/21)



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

Our address:	Collins Avenue, Whitehall, Dublin 9.
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Our website:	www.staidanscbs.ie

### 1. TYPE OF SCHOOL

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.).

### 2. CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT

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

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**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.

### **3. OPERATING CONTEXT**

Edmund Rice Secondary School operates within the legal context of

➤ Relevant sections of:

- Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2011
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- Disability Act 2005
- Education Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) 2007
- Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**: The school is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Acts and the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**. Data provided to Edmund Rice Secondary School in respect of an application for admission is subject to the terms and provisions of the Data Protection Act (1998), the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003) and the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**. We rely on Parents/Guardians to provide us with accurate and complete information and to update us in relation to any changes in the information provided. Should you wish to update or access your child's personal data, you should write to the School Principal.

St. Aidan's CBS also operates within the regulatory, legal and financial context of:

- The regulations of the Department of Education and Skills
- The rights of trustees as set out in the *Education Act, 1998*
- The Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter
- The Articles of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools
- The regulations of the Department of Education and Skills and the curricular programmes so prescribed which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the *Education Act, 1998*.
- The funding and resources available to the school at any given time. The financial and teaching resources of the school are provided by a combination of grants and teacher allocations from the Department of Education and Skills, voluntary contributions, and occasional fundraising<sup>1</sup>. Implementation of the school plan and school policy has due regard to the resources and funding available.

Within this operating context, Edmund Rice Secondary School is a school that

- 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

#### **4. ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND ADMISSION PROCEDURES:**

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 2020**.

All queries arising from the Admissions Policy may be addressed to Ms. Patricia Bourden, 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

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### 4.1 Students eligible for admission to First Year must

- Have reached the required age of 12 on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

### 4.2 Admission Procedure

- To apply, parents/guardians should complete the official Edmund Rice Secondary School Application Form, which will be issued through the feeder Primary Schools and which will also be available from the school office and from the school website [insert website address]
- The application form for entry into First Year in Autumn 2020 will be available from **23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2019**
- The closing date for receipt of completed applications for First Year for the school year 2020/21 is **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> of September**
- When an application form, properly completed and signed, is received, it will be stamped with the date on which it was received
- Properly completed application forms will be acknowledged
- Incomplete application forms will not be processed but will be returned to the parents/guardians for completion
- Late applications will be considered only after all applications received on time have been fully processed.

## 5. Allocation of Places in First Year 2020/21

Decisions regarding student admissions are a matter for the Board of Management.

As soon as possible but not later than 21 days after the closing date for receipt of completed application forms, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of each application, and inform the parents/guardians of the outcome in writing (as required by the *Education Welfare Act 2000*).

When a place in the school is offered, parents/guardians will be required to confirm in writing their acceptance of the place. If the place is not accepted by the date specified in the letter of offer, the offer may be withdrawn.

A maximum of **120** places will be available in First Year for the school year 2020/21. In the event that applications for admission exceed this number the Board of Management will allocate places in accordance with the following procedure:

### **5.1 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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). **Applications from twins or triplets will not be treated as separate applications, i.e. if a place is offered to one twin then a place is also offered to the other boy(s) where a place exists**
6. Only students whose applications have been received on time will be offered places in accordance with the criteria above.
7. Places will only be offered to students in a given category after all students in each previous category have been offered a place.
8. Where there are fewer places remaining than applicants in a given category, students will be offered places based on a lottery.

The lottery will be conducted as follows:

- a) The lottery will be supervised by at least three of – A member of the Garda Síochána, the Principal, the Chairperson of the Board of Management, and the Chairperson of the Parents Council.
- b) Names will be drawn until all places are filled.
- c) When all places are filled, names of applicants will continue to be drawn to establish the order of the waiting list.
- d) If a vacancy arises it will be offered to the applicant highest on the waiting list.

e) The waiting list will be terminated when the first term begins.

## **5.2 Excess of Applicants**

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**

## **6. Withdrawal of an offer of a place**

The offer of a place may be withdrawn if:

- the place is not accepted in writing by the date specified in the letter offering the place [see Section 5 above]
- it subsequently emerges that information furnished in the application form was false and the false information resulted in the offer of a place which would not have been offered otherwise.
- The applicant, in conjunction with their parents/guardians, does not confirm that they are aware of the characteristic spirit of the school [see section on characteristic spirit above].
- The applicant, in conjunction with their parents/guardians, does not confirm acceptance of the school's Code of Behaviour
- The applicant fails to sit an Assessment Test, the date for which will be communicated in writing to the parents/guardians of the students accepted for admission at the school. This Assessment Test is not an entrance examination as the student has already been allocated a place in the school. Where an applicant cannot sit the test for good reason on the date specified, an alternative date will be arranged.
- The applicant, in conjunction with their parents/guardians, does not complete the detailed student data form that will be issued following offer of the place.

## **7. Appeal Procedure:**

Where the Board of Management decides to refuse admission to the school, the parents/guardians of the student concerned may appeal the decision to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the *Education Act, 1998*. The appeal must generally be made within 42 calendar days of the date that the decision of the Board of Management was notified to the parents/guardians.

## **8. ADMISSION OF APPLICANTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

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St. Aidan's CBS welcomes applications from parents/guardians of students with special educational needs. The school will use the resources (Finance and personnel) provided by the Department of Education & Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs and will ensure that these students are free to participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonably practicable.

While recognising and fully supporting the rights of parents/guardians to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to provide for students with particular educational needs is dependent on resources suitable to those needs being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make the Board of Management aware of any special needs as early as possible, as it may take some time for the Department to process applications for the resources needed. In order to determine the specific resources, facilities and learning support required, the Board will request a copy of the student's medical and/or psychological report. Where such a report is not available, the Board will request an immediate assessment. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the student relative to their special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs of the student as specified in the report. The school will also request information from the student's primary school with regard to such matters as learning support and/or resource hours. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to the student commencing to attend the school, request the Department of Education and Skills to provide the resources necessary to meet the needs of the student as outlined in the psychological or medical report.

A representative of the Board will meet with the parents/guardians of the student to discuss the student's needs and the school's capacity to meet them. It may be necessary for the Board to postpone the attendance of a student at the school, pending the receipt of an assessment report, and/or the provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education and Skills to meet the needs specified in the psychological or medical report.

The school commits itself to working closely with the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) to ensure that students with special needs are given all reasonable assistance, subject to available resources, to achieve their educational potential.

## **9. ENROLMENT PROCEDURE**

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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 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019.**

Completed applications must be returned before **2.00p.m. on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019.** 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. A €30 non-refundable fee must accompany all applications

*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 2020.** 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.**

## **9. TRANSFER OF A STUDENT FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL**

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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.

## 11. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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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.

## 12. APPEALS PROCEDURE

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**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.ie](http://staidanscbs.ie), and is also available by contacting the school secretary. This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Management.**

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

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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.

## **14. TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAMME**

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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.

## **15. RATIFICATION**

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This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **9<sup>th</sup> May 2019** and was agreed for publication by the Edmund Rice Schools Trust.

## **16. CONSULTATION & REVIEW**

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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.