



Admission Policy of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál

School Address: Convent Primary School, Claremorris, Co. Mayo

Roll number: 18070U

School Patron: Archbishop Francis Duffy

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 October 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 Scoil Mhuire gan Smál'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

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is a Roman Catholic School, built in 1957 by The Sisters of Mercy. It operates under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills and under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. The school follows the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills.

As a Roman Catholic School, Muire gan Smál aims to provide a holistic education for all our pupils - cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual. We aim to provide this education in co-operation with teachers, pupils, parents, management and the wider community.

Our school supports the principles of:

Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with additional needs. Equality of access and participation.

Parental choice in relation to the school, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school. Respect for diversity of values, belief, traditions, languages and ways of life. In Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, the full range of classes is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Classes are co-educational for the first

three years-from Junior Infants through to the end of First Class. At this stage, the boys transfer to another school. Our school caters for girls only from Second Class through to Sixth Class. ‘Catholic Ethos’ in the context of a Catholic Primary School means the ethos characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

The full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, a living relationship with God and with other people; and

Including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and

A philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and

The formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith;

And which school provided 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.

3. Admission Statement

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 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

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.

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál will co-operate 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.

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 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.

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is an all-girls school from Second Class to Sixth Class and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to a class from Second to Sixth inclusive.

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 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 the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is a mainstream school. We do not have a Special Educational Needs class attached. All children with additional needs are catered for within the mainstream class setting. Additional support is provided by Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistants as allocated by the Department of Education and Skills.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the child will not have reached his/her 4th birthday, by September 1st of the year of enrolment
- b) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details)
- c) a 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
- d) in the opinion of the Board of Management, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to school staff, school property, other pupils or their education
- e) A boy applies for a place from Second Class to Sixth Class as Scoil Mhuire gan Smál provides education exclusively for girls from Second to Sixth class

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

- Date of birth (Priority eldest)
- Siblings of students currently attending the school
- Children living in the local catchment area

- Children of staff members
- Children, grandchildren or siblings of former students of the school (See 7f)

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:

- Decision will be made by lottery which will be independently verified.

The current maximum enrolment in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is 260 pupils, as this is the current maximum pupil-teacher ratio for ten mainstream classroom teachers (Circular 0025/2022 Appendix A). This is subject to review should the Staffing Schedule change or should an eleventh mainstream classroom teacher be appointed.

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:

- (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;
- (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) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than,

(1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school

(2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

(In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, we will only apply this criterion to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

- (g) 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 Scoil Mhuire gan Smál will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- 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 that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used when making a decision regarding 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 our 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 Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, 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 Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 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 other Board of Management member with a list of the students in relation to whom –

- (1) An application for admission to the school has been received,
- (2) An offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (3) An offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

This list may include any or all of the following:

- (1) The date on which an application for admission was received by the school,
- (2) The date on which an offer of admission was made by the school,
- (3) The date on which an offer was accepted by an applicant.
- (4) A student's personal details including his/her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning 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 Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 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 Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 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.

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 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 classes 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 other than the school's intake group are as follows:

Parents will be asked to:

- (a) complete an Admission Application Form
- (b) read the 'School Code of Behaviour' and sign that it is acceptable to them and that he/she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the pupil.

Following receipt of the above documents the school will proceed with enrolment of the pupil except where the class requested is oversubscribed.

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

The board of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 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. He or she will discuss with the parents how the request may be accommodated.

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.

Note: 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.

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.

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.

This document was drafted in March 2020 in consultation with Board of Management, parents and staff, using the template provided by the Archdiocese of Tuam and the finalised policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11th November 2020.

Signed: Peter Mc Callig Date: 14/12/22
Chairperson BoM

Signed: Anne Varley Date: 14/12/22
Acting Principal