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Admission Policy of Rockfield National School

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 draft policy was approved by the school patron on 22nd June 2020 and reviewed on 5th December 2022. 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 Rockfield National School 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

Rockfield National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Achonry.

"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 which 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 Rockfield National School 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.

Mission Statement:

Rockfield National School, Roll Number 15378K, is a Roman Catholic School, under the Patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Achonry (which is established in connection with the minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people.

All pupils are valued and while Rockfield National School is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions. A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn, by example and teaching, to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and different nationalities. Self-discipline is encouraged and a realisation of the importance of personal choice.

In Rockfield National School, religious instruction, in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church, is part of the education given to children who belong to that church and to other Christian children whose parents request it.

Pupils are prepared for receiving the sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation in accordance with arrangements in the diocese.

Prayer is a feature of the school day. Religious icons e.g. statues, pictures, sacred space etc. are on display to promote our Catholic ethos. Catholic ceremonies both in school and in the church are celebrated throughout the year.

The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.

We endeavor to instill pride and joy in the treasures of the Irish culture and language in our pupils. Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt.

Rockfield National School will promote gender and racial equity amongst the teachers and pupils.

We are a community for learning where students, parents, and staff work together to nurture the academic and life skills which will enable our students to achieve their maximum potential in a happy, stimulating, inclusive and caring school environment.

We encourage excellence in learning and reward effort.

We recognise the uniqueness of each child in our care and we strive to develop his/her full potential. To this end we work in partnership with parents and the wider community.

Ní neart go cur le chéile (There is no strength without unity)

3. Admission Statement

Rockfield National School 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.

Rockfield National School 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Rockfield National School 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.

Rockfield National School 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.

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

Rockfield National School is not a Special School or a mainstream school with a special class attached. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are catered for by their mainstream class teacher with the support of the Special Education Team. The onus is on the parent to provide the relevant information to ensure that the school can have all the adequate supports in place for a new pupil, prior to the start date of school.

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 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) Rockfield National School 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.

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:

Decisions on the allocation of places in Junior Infants

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:

1. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of April and who have brothers and sisters currently enrolled in the school.

2. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of April and who qualify as a resident of the parish. Children applying for places in Rockfield National School, living in the Parish will be given priority over children from bordering/neighbouring parishes.

Note: Two of following documents dated within three months of the date of application must be supplied as proof of address: Bank Statement, Utility bill, e.g. electricity, or water.

3. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of April and who are not included within the preceding categories and whose parent is a member of the staff of the school.

4. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of April and who are not included in categories 1-3.

Note: The Board of Management currently operates a maximum average of 26 pupils per mainstream class, based on the staffing circular of the Department of Education and Skills Circular 18/2020

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:

The board of management will apply the four selection criteria in the order of priority in which they are listed. In the event of a tie for the final place, the board will then determine the access to the final place by choosing the eldest of the tied applicants. In the event of more than one tied applicant having the same date of birth, the board will draw lots between these tied applicants for the last place. Any remaining applicant will be retained on a waiting list for the school year in which admission is being sought.

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,
- (a) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (c) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (d) 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, in the case of the siblings of a student attending or having attended the school.
- (e) 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 Rockfield National School will be based on the following:

- Our 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 that 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 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 Rockfield National School you must indicate—

- 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
- 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 Rockfield National School where—

- it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- 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.
- 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
- 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 Rockfield National School 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 Rockfield National School 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.

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 years and during the school year

15 (A) 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:

Parents complete an application form.

Note: The Board of Management currently operates a maximum average of 26 pupils per mainstream class, based on the staffing circular of the Department of Education and Skills Circular 18/2020

Selection Criteria – Senior Infants – 6th class

1. Children who have siblings currently enrolled in the school.
2. Children who qualify as a resident for the purposes of this Admission Policy within the Parish of Coolaney & Killoran.

a. Note: Two of following documents dated within three months of the date of application must be supplied as proof of address: Bank Statement, Utility bill, e.g. electricity, or water.

3. Children who are not included within any of the preceding categories and whose parent is a member of the staff of the school.
4. Children who are not included in categories 1-3.

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:

The board of management will apply the four selection criteria in the order of priority in which they are listed. In the event of a tie for the final place, the board will then determine the access to the final place by choosing the eldest of the tied applicants. In the event of more than one tied applicant having the same date of birth, the board will draw lots between these tied applicants for the last place. Any remaining applicant will be kept on a waiting list for the school year in which admission is being sought.

15 (B) 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.

Parents complete an application form.

Note: The Board of Management currently operates a maximum average of 26 pupils per mainstream class, based on the staffing circular of the Department of Education and Skills Circular 18/2020

Selection Criteria

1. Children who have siblings currently enrolled in the school.
2. Children who qualify as resident for the purposes of this Admission Policy within the Parish of Coolaney & Killoran.
 - a. *Note: Two of following documents dated within three months of the date of application must be supplied as proof of address: bank statement, utility bill, gas bill, electricity bill or water bill.*
3. Children who are not included within any of the preceding categories and whose parent is a member of the staff of the school.
4. Children who are not included in categories 1-3.

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:

The board of management will apply the four selection criteria in the order of priority in which they are listed. In the event of a tie for the final place, the board will then determine the access to the final place by choosing the eldest of the tied applicants. In the event of more than one tied applicant having the same date of birth, the board will draw lots between these tied applicants for the last place. Any remaining applicant will be kept on a waiting list for the school year in which admission is being sought.

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

The Board of Management, Rockfield National School 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

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has 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) to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student, may request the Board of Management 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 of Management 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 within three weeks of the date of the receipt of the refusal 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 within three weeks of the date of the receipt of the refusal 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 within three weeks of the date of the receipt of the refusal 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.

Signed: Fr. Patrick J. Holleran P.P.
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 6th December 2023