

# **Admission Policy**

## **Admission Policy of Douglas Community School**

**School Address: Clermont Avenue, Douglas, Cork.**

**Roll number: 91396R**

**School Patron/s: Cork Education and Training Board and the Diocese of Cork and Ross**

### **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 on 19<sup>th</sup> June 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 Douglas Community 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**

Douglas Community School is a multi-denominational school under the joint patronage of the Cork Education and Training Board and the Diocese of Cork and Ross.

The Deed of Trust states that the school was established with:

The object of providing a comprehensive system of post-primary education to all children of the community and this education will include, combining instruction in academic and practical subjects and ongoing education for persons. This will contribute toward the spiritual, moral, mental and physical wellbeing and development of the said community.

Douglas Community School is a Christian school which works to develop the full potential of each student – spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical, artistic, creative and emotional.

We promote the integration and wholeness of the individual and work in partnership with students, parents and community to enhance self-esteem, self-discipline and motivation of each student.

We work to ensure that our students leave school well-educated, self-confident, articulate and with life-skills and attitudes that enable them to live good lives and contribute to society.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Douglas Community School is an all-boys school and will not discriminate in its admission of a boy 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, 'gender ground', 'civil status ground', 'family status ground', 'sexual orientation ground', 'religion ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'ground of race' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Douglas Community 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.

Douglas Community 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.

#### **Single Gender Schools**

Douglas Community School is an all-boys school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

#### **School with special education classes**

Douglas Community School is a school which has established ASD classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education, which provides an education exclusively for students with ASD and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

#### 4. 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

***A school that admits students of one gender only***

Douglas Community School provides education exclusively for boys and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

#### 5. 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:

**Proposed criteria:**

1. Brothers of students who are already attending the school.
2. Brothers of students who previously attended the school.
3. Sons of past students of the school.
4. Boys who are the eldest in the family and attend one of the named feeder schools.
5. Boys who attend a named feeder primary school.
6. Boys who live in the immediate vicinity of the school but have not attended primary schools in the area.
7. Pupils whose families have moved into the area served by the school.

**The list of feeder schools include:**

- Ballintemple National School
- Ballyheada National School
- Ballygarvan National School
- Bunscoil Chríost Rí, Turners Cross
- Educate Together National School, Rochestown
- Gaelscoil an Taghlaigh Naofa, Ballypnehane
- Gaelscoil Na Dúglaise
- Gaelscoil Mhachan
- Glasheen Boys National School
- Goggins Hill National School
- Morning Star National school
- Scoil Barra Naofa, Monkstown
- Scoil Barra Naofa Bhuachaillí, Beaumont
- Scoil Na Croise Naofa, Mahon
- Scoil Niocláis, Frankfield
- Scoil Phádraid Naofa, Rochestown
- Scoil Ursula, Blackrock
- Shanbally National School
- St Anthony's, Ballinlough
- St. Columbas National School
- St. Lukes School Douglas
- St. Michael's Primary School, Blackrock
- Star of the Sea, Passage West
- Togher Boys National School

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 Chairperson and Secretary of the Board of Management will preside over a draw and the student who is drawn will receive a place in the school.**

## 6. 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) 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## 7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Douglas Community School 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 to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

## 8. 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 17 below for further details).

## **9. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from Douglas Community School, 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.

## **10. 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 Douglas Community School 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 9 above.

## **11. 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 board 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).

## **12. 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 Douglas Community 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 Douglas Community 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.

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.

### **13. 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.

### **14. Procedures for admission of students to other years 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 or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

The Board of Management recognises a student's right to education and that a "second-chance" may, in some circumstances, benefit a student.

On this basis applications for transfer from other post primary schools are normally only considered where the following conditions are met:

1. The applicant's presence is unlikely to adversely affect the education of the pupils already enrolled in the school.
2. The applicant's presence is unlikely to adversely affect the safety of the pupils already enrolled in the school.
3. The applicant has no previous history of substance abuse or of the distribution of such substances.
4. The applicant has never seriously harassed/assaulted/bullied other pupils or staff members in his previous school(s).
5. The applicant has not previously, in a serious manner, hindered the educational progress of other fellow students i.e. persistently interfered with the teaching and learning and infringed the rights of others to proper educational provision.
6. The subjects available are suitable to the applicant and the applicant is willing to attend classes in all curriculum subjects provided for the class group he is joining.
7. There is sufficient space in the class (i.e. using the maximum class size guidelines).
8. The applicant is not applying for a place in either 3<sup>rd</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year (exam years).

Before completing the official Application Form all applicants for transfer from other Post Primary Schools must provide details of:

1. Reasons for transfer.
2. Report on attendance, punctuality and behaviour in transferring school.
3. Copies of all school and State Examinations Commissions Examination Results.
4. Furnish a letter from the Principal of the transferring school to support the application.

8. 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:

Applications for transfer from other post primary schools during the school year are normally only considered where the following conditions are met:

1. The applicant's presence is unlikely to adversely affect the education of the pupils already enrolled in the school.
2. The applicant's presence is unlikely to adversely affect the safety of the pupils already enrolled in the school.
3. The applicant has no previous history of substance abuse or of the distribution of such

substances.

4. The applicant has never seriously harassed/assaulted/bullied other pupil or staff member in his previous school(s).

5. The applicant has not previously, in a serious manner, hindered the educational progress of other fellow students i.e. persistently interfered with the teaching and learning and infringed the rights of others to proper educational provision.

6. The subjects available are suitable to the applicant and the applicant is willing to attend classes in all curriculum subjects provided for the class group he is joining.

7. There is sufficient space in the class (i.e. using the maximum class size guidelines).

8. The applicant is not applying for a place in either 3<sup>rd</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year (exam years).

Before completing the official Application Form all applicants for transfer from other Post Primary Schools must provide details of:

1. Reasons for transfer.

2. Report on attendance, punctuality and behaviour in transferring school.

3. Copies of all school and State Examinations Commissions Examination Results.

4. Furnish a letter from the Principal of the transferring school to support the application.

All student transfers and their parents/guardians must meet with the school principal prior to being offered a place at Douglas Community School.

### **15. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees**

The board of management at Douglas Community 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.

### **16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

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:

Douglas Community School offers Religious Education and not Religious Instruction. Therefore, there is no requirement on the school to provide alternative tuition at this time.

### **17. Reviews/appeals**

#### **Review of decisions by the board of Management**

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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.

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, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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.

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.

## **Section B:**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Admission Policy for ASD Class Douglas Community School**

This policy must be read in conjunction with and is part of the overall Admission Policy for Douglas Community School. The aim of Douglas Community School is to offer a positive meaningful educational experience to the student that allows him to develop to his full learning potential, in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. After a period of time observing, assessing and inter-acting with the student, a Student Support Plan will be developed following consultation with parents/guardians and with other relevant professional staff (e.g. NEPS Psychologist, Co-ordinator/Teacher(s) of Special Educational Needs/ASD, Occupational Therapist, School Principal/Deputy Principal etc), as deemed appropriate.

The aim of the ASD Class is to offer a specific learning environment within a mainstream post-primary school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream educational activities that are available and that are deemed appropriate to the ongoing education of the student.

#### **External Support Services**

Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). These services include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy. The Board of Management at Douglas Community School has no function in accessing these services,

but merely acts as a relevant conduit for their provision, where available and possible. Furthermore, Douglas Community School cannot guarantee any additional service or support that may be available to the student through the offices of the HSE. Douglas Community School does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is a matter for the parents alone to ensure that all such possible support services are being accessed and availed of.

### **Pre enrolment**

All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-V and ICD 10. All applications must be accompanied by an assessment report, carried out by an Educational/Clinical Psychologist approved by the DES, recommending the applicant as suitable.

**A prospective student for the ASD Class must have a professional recommendation, from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multi-disciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism specific class.** All reports in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Board of Management. The withholding of such reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.

Parents should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in the ASD Classes in Douglas Community School is twelve students. It should be noted that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily guarantee the student a place in the ASD Class.

The Board of Management require that parents must accept that the enrolment process only proceeds where the educational and physical needs of the applicants as identified can be met within the ASD Class.

The parents of the applicant must accept and agree to the Douglas Community School Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

The ASD Class at Douglas Community School will only cater for children that are 12 years or more, and less than 18 years of age, on the 1st of September of the school year in question.

### **Enrolment**

All applications for enrolment in the ASD Class will be considered within the context of the school's Admission Policy. Where the number of applicants exceeds the places available, priority will be given in the following order:

- Students currently enrolled in Douglas Community School.
- Brothers of current students in Douglas Community School who apply.
- Applicants resident within the defined school Catchment Area (see General Students Admission Policy) and be attending:
- (1) the ASD Class in the feeder schools of:

Ballygarvan National School, Bunscoil Chríost Rí, Turners Cross, Gaelscoil an Taghlaigh Naofa, Ballypnehane, Gaelscoil Na Dúglaise, Gaelscoil Mhachan, Glasheen Boys National School, Goggins Hill National School, Morning Star National School, Scoil Barra Naofa Bhuachaillí, Beaumont, Scoil Na Croise Naofa, Mahon, Scoil Niocláis, Frankfield, Scoil Ursula, Blackrock, St Anthony's, Ballinlough, St. Columbas National School, St. Michael's Primary School, Blackrock, Togher Boys National School.

- (2) attending the local feeder National Schools, but not in an ASD class – as listed in the policy.
- (3) applicants not attending the above named feeder schools but for whom The ASD class in Douglas Community School would be nearest to their home residence.

Parents should note that where the number of applicants at any stage of the criteria above exceeds the number of spaces available within that criterion, then the date of birth of the applicant will be considered with priority being given to the oldest applicant and continuing thus forth until all places are filled. If two or more applicants share the same date of birth, then places will be allocated by lottery.

### **Application Process**

An Enrolment Application Form, a copy of which is available from the school office only, should be fully completed and submitted by the parent on behalf of the applicant. The closing date for receipt of such completed applications by the school is published in the Annual Admission Notice for the relevant year.

This Enrolment Application Form should be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate of the applicant and accompanied by all of the up to date and pertinent educational psychological assessments(s) and diagnostic report (s). The Enrolment Application form must also be accompanied by School Reports and relative documented information from all previous schools that the applicant attended. Proof of address is necessary.

Only applications that meet the criteria for enrolment, subject to available space and maximum student numbers, will be considered.

Students that are currently enrolled in an ASD Class in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer during the course of the school academic year

Students enrolled in a ASD Class in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer at the end of a school academic year unless the family have moved residence into the catchment area of Douglas Community School.

The advice, support and recommendation of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for the area/region, based on the needs of the applicants, will be considered in the

decision making process associated with enrolment of applicants in the Douglas Community School ASD Class.

It is important that Parents/Guardians note that Douglas Community School may in certain clarified circumstances and following an assessment and investigation, be unable to meet the special educational or physical needs of the applicant on the grounds that:

- (i) the applicant is deemed a risk, on health, safety, welfare or security grounds to themselves and/or other, or
- (ii) admission of the applicant will make impossible, or have a serious detrimental effect on, the education provision by the Douglas Community School as an educational establishment of its services to others.

The Board of Management will make the final decision on all applications to enrol.

### **On acceptance of a place**

- The parents of a child being offered a place in the ASD Class will be invited to visit the school to meet with the ASD Class Co-ordinator, to discuss the placement/enrolment of their son. Any information requested by the Parent will be provided at this meeting.
- The parents may be requested to consent to a visit by a member of the Special Educational Needs professional staff at Douglas Community School, to visit the existing school placement of the student concerned in order to observe the student in a classroom situation.
- The parents will be invited to accompany their child to visit Douglas Community School ASD Class and meet staff.
- The Parents may be consulted about the Student Support Plan for their child.
- The NEPS psychologist and SENO will be appraised of the Student Support Plan.
- A child may be phased gradually into the ASD special class through a mutually agreed process between Parents and the Management of the school.
- Where it is deemed appropriate, a student in the ASD Class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purpose by school management.

The placement of every student within the ASD Class will be subject to regular review, by school management, staff and where appropriate the professional services external to the school resulting on one of the following:

- continue within the ASD Class at Douglas Community School
- integrate fully into the mainstream post-primary
- seek an alternative and more appropriate educational placement for the student as Douglas Community School is unable to meet the educational needs of the student.

In such an instance the support and assistance of the staff at Douglas Community School will be available to assist the family in securing a more suitable learning environment in another educational institution, for the student concerned.

### **Code of Behaviour**

As already indicated above the parents of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to Douglas Community School's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

Children with ASD may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the student's Individual Educational Plan. All students including those with special educational needs are subject to the school Code of Behaviour and the terms of the Health and Safety Statement adopted by the Board of Management at the school. Where any student's behaviour impacts in a negative way on the other students in the ASD Class or the students in a mainstream class, to an extent that their constitutional right to an education is being interfered with, as judged by the Board of Management of the school, then the school reserves the right to advise Parents that a more suitable educational setting should be found for their child.

The Board of Management at Douglas Community School reserves the right of admission and to refuse to enrol a student, within the terms of this policy. Parents/Guardians of applicants who are refused admission to The Douglas Community School will be advised of their right to appeal the matter to the Secretary General, DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Ratified by Board of Management on 26/09/2023

Signed : 

Chairperson



Principal and secretary of the Board of Management