



Admission Policy

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa,
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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 **25/09/2020**. 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 **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa'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 (for mainstream classes and special class for pupils with ASD) is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

1. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school.

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa is an Irish medium primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. The full range of classes is taught in the school and classes are of mixed gender.

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school. The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parent's choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of any applicant or student. It will make every effort to secure those resources – where the resources cannot be secured the school may refuse admission. The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil – teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department of Education and Skills and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes, etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department.

In September 2021 Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa established a special class for children with ASD. The special class is intended to meet the needs of pupils with complex and severe educational needs arising from their diagnosis of Autism meeting DSM V or ICD 10 diagnostic criteria. The class is for all pupils who meet these criteria irrespective of cognitive ability.

Our Special Class is an additional support mechanism for pupils with a diagnosis of additional needs who find/would find attending mainstream classes on a full-time basis challenging. Our Special Class is a class within the overall school and as such forms an integral part of our school community. As far

as possible, pupils attending the Special Class will be integrated into the day-to-day activities of the school and it is envisaged that pupils attending the Special Class will, as far as possible, participate in school related events.

2. Admission Statement

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa 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.

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa 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.

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa 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.

3. Admission of Students.

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa shall admit each student seeking admission upon receipt of completed Application Form together with a copy of the child's Birth Certificate except where:

- (a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 11](#) 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) **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** is an all-denominational school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of his Lordship, the Bishop of Cork and Ross and may refuse to admit a student where 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

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa is a mainstream school. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are catered for by their mainstream class teacher, with the support of the Special Education Team.

For further details, please see Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa's *Policy for Provision for Pupils with Special Education Needs*, which is available by request from the school office.

In September 2021, **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa**, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, established a special class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism (ASD) that meet the criteria set out by the NCSE to qualify for enrolment in a Specialist ASD Class in a mainstream setting.

Criteria for Admission to the Special Class for pupils with ASD, in our Mainstream School

- 1.** Each child must have a diagnosis of Autism/ Autistic Spectrum Disorder using DSM V or ICD 10 criteria as set out by a professional/individual approved by the Department of Education and skills and a Multi-Disciplinary Assessment Report. This report must be current and must include a recommendation that a placement in a special class in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.
- 2.** As inclusion is an integral part of our school ethos, it is a necessary criteria of enrolment that any child attending the special class must have the potential of meaningful integration into a mainstream classroom setting. The level of integration, duration and timing will be decided upon by the principal and staff of the Special Class in consultation with the mainstream teacher and the parents of the child in question and on the basis of information shared at an annual review meeting.
- 3.** Admission procedures outlined in this policy must be followed when applying for admission to the Special Class in our mainstream school. The Application Form for the Special Class in the mainstream school must be filled out by parents and submitted to the school with all relevant reports.

In the event that the number of children meeting the criteria above is greater than the number of places available in the Special Class, the categories outlined in Section 6 of this Policy will be used as a basis for prioritising admission to the Special Class.

5. Oversubscription

In the event that **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** 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:

Mainstream Class:

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Criterion</u>
1	Priority is given to brothers and sisters (including stepsiblings, resident at same address) of children already in the school or who have attended the school in the past, with priority going to the oldest.
2	Families whose primary residence is in the parish of Ballyphehane or who are in the process of moving to the parish.
3	Children of current teaching staff.
4	Children of parents who are past pupils of the school.
	The criteria above are listed in order of priority. When spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and space is still available, then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritization proceeds until all places have been allocated. It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, places will be given within the priority category (and only in that priority category) using a lottery system. Each Applicant Student in this position will be allocated a number and the numbers shall be randomly picked (by a random number generator and under the supervision of members of the Board of Management).

Special Class for pupils with ASD:

Having received an application form, the school may in the first instance consult with the SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser) and other professionals working with the child (teachers, childcare workers, psychologists etc.) in order to ascertain the suitability of the child for a special class for children with ASD in a mainstream school.

Following this consultation, the priority categories for the Special Class for pupils with ASD, in our mainstream school are as follow:

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Criterion</u>
1	Children who meet the criteria of this policy and who are currently enrolled in Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa with a recommendation that a special class placement within a mainstream school is best suited to the child's needs.

2	Children who meet the criteria of this policy who are siblings (including step siblings) of children currently attending Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa or who have attended the school in the past.
3	Children who meet the criteria of this policy living in the parish of Ballyphehane.
4	Children who have attended Naíonra an Teaghlaigh Naofa.
5	All other children who meet the criteria of this policy.
	It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, places will be given within the priority category (and only in that priority category) using a lottery system. Each Applicant Student in this position will be allocated a number and the numbers shall be randomly picked (by a random number generator and under the supervision of members of the Board of Management).

Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in the particular priority category. The waiting list will remain valid only for places that arise in the school year applied for (usually the following school year). Applicants must reapply for a place for subsequent years, on the dates outlined in the Admissions Notice for the relevant year.

6. What will not be considered or taken into account.

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** 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. (b) the payment of any fees or contributions to the school.
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude. (*other than in relation to: admission to our special clas for children with a diagnosis of ASD insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned*)
- (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 except in cases except in cases outlined in the selection criteria.
- (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).

7. Decisions on applications.

All decisions on applications for admission to **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** 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 12](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 13](#) 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 **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa**, 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 16](#) below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa**, 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 **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** 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.

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section

15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

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.

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 **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** 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 **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** 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. Placement on the waiting list is dependant on the parent/guardian indicating so on the correspondence sent to them by the school. In the event of the form not being returned inside the requested timeframe the child's name will be removed from the waiting list.

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 to **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** 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 **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** 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:

Priority	Criterion
1	Priority is given to brothers and sisters (including stepsiblings, resident at same address) of children already in the school or who have attended the school in the past,
2	Families whose primary residence is in the parish of Ballyphehane or who are in the process of moving to the parish.
3	Children who are attending a Gaelscoil.

4	Children of current teaching staff.
5	Children of parents who are past pupils of the school.
	The criteria above are listed in order of priority. When spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and space is still available, then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritization proceeds until all places have been allocated. If the class is oversubscribed within any of the sections 1-4 above, all other things being equal, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all available places are allocated.

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

The board of **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa** or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions 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

Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa provides religious instruction to its pupils as part of the school day. In the case of a parent requesting that a student attend the school without attending religious instruction, arrangements will be made to accommodate that student in the classroom, with the planned provision of work in another curricular area, without resulting in a reduction in the school day to the student.

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, 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, 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 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.

Sinithe:

Denis Bohane
(Cathaoirleach Bord Bainistíochta)

Máire Ní Nuanáin
(Príomhoide)

Dáta: 25/09/2023