

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Rationale:

This policy was drawn up to comply with applicable legislation and provide clear guidelines for School Management and parents.

General Information:

School Name: Scoil Mhuire, Clondra N.S.

Address: Clondra,
Co. Longford

Telephone: (043) 3326417.

Website: clondrans.com

Rolla: 18733T

Denominational Character: Catholic Primary School.

Name of Patron: Bishop Paul Connell.

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of The Education Act 1998 (as amended), 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 November 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 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.

Notices will also be placed in the Parish Newsletter, entrance in the local Play School and at the school entrances to notify parents that the school is accepting enrolment applications for the coming year. The enrolment process is by written application only. Completed application forms should be returned by the date stated in our Annual Admissions Notice each year. All applications must be fully completed for consideration.

The completion of an enrolment application form or the placement of your child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.

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.

The parents and guardians of all pupil's at Scoil Mhuire Clondra, by accepting a place in the school, are deemed to accept the code of behaviour and ethos of the school on behalf of their

children and in addition all other school policies on curriculum, organisation and management. These policies may be amended from time to time and are available on the website or, on request, from the office.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra is a co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of Bishop Francis Dufy.

“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:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; 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 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 Scoil Mhuire, Clondra 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.

The mission of this school is to enable every child to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually, aesthetically and physically to his/her full potential in a friendly, safe, and comfortable environment. We endeavour to equip each child with the skills and positive self-esteem to empower them to contribute to their community and become lifelong learners. This work can best be done where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils.

We support the principles of:

- inclusivity, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need.
- equality of access and participation in the school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accents, gender, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status, religious/political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.

On enrolment Scoil Mhuire will be collecting personal data relating to parents/guardians and children. This information will be used to contact you in relation to your child and to liaise with other government departments (HSE, Department of Education and Skills Túsla), or other school matters in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

3. Admission Statement

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, 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, Clondra, 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.

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, 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, Clondra 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.

Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018

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

We provide literacy and numeracy support for those most in need of it, along with support for those with specific learning difficulties and for children who have specific developmental delays. Our objective is that special education teaching resources are utilised in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for pupils with special educational needs.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where:

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see Section 7 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.

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

Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018

6. Procedure for Enrolment:

- Parents seeking to enrol their children in Scoil Mhuire Clondra are requested to return a completed Expression of Interest Form (available in the school) with an original Birth / Adoption and current utility bill or other current, acceptable proof of address, in order that the child be considered for enrolment in the school. If the child meets entrance criteria, and has acquired a place in the school, parents will be asked to complete an Enrolment form. They will also be supplied with a copy of the School Policy and Code of Discipline and Code of Behaviour. They will be asked to return the completed forms (medical forms and acceptance of Discipline Policy and Code of Behaviour Forms) by a specific date which will be outlined in our Annual Admissions Notice. Enrolment forms must be signed by parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
- Under the D.E.S. rules for National Schools pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years and upwards.
- Commencement of applications for admission, application deadlines and the date by which applicants will be notified of the decision on their application will be published on our Annual Admittance Notice.
- Pupils will be accepted based on the criteria set out in the Decision Making section, classroom space, approval by the School Management and also in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
- In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs the School Management will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available, will request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report the School Management will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Management deems that further resources are required, it will request the Department of Education and Science to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any combination of the following: visiting teacher service, SET (special education teacher), special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other.

The school will meet with the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. Where necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held, which may include parents, principal, class teacher, SET or psychologist, as appropriate.

7. Oversubscription

While recognizing the right of parents to enroll their child in the school of their choice, the School Management of Scoil Mhuire Clondra N.S. is also obliged to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom, bearing in mind:

1. Size of / available space in classroom.
2. Educational needs of children of a particular age.
3. Multi-grade classes.
4. Presence of children with special educational / behavioural needs.
5. D.E.S. guidelines.

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. Brothers and sisters (including step-siblings resident at same address) of children already enrolled – priority to oldest.
2. Children living within the agreed catchment area, townlands of Clondra, Knappogue, Clonard, Jamestown, Fisherstown, Aughereevagh, Dereen, Slieve, Kilmore, Clonmore, Aughnagore, Springfield, Rhynmount and Begnagh – priority to oldest.
3. Children of current school staff – priority to oldest.
4. Children currently resident in the parish of Killashee – priority to oldest.
5. If space is still available, children not included in the above criteria will be considered for acceptance by an independently verified agreed system.

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:

- Priority will be given to children meeting criteria 1-3 above.
- In the event of two or more students tied for a place, children's date of birth will be the deciding factor, with the oldest children (verified by birth certificate) filling any remaining places.

8. 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, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at:
 - (I) an early intervention class, or
 - (II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (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 children meeting our criteria of siblings of a student attending or having attended the school
- (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).

9. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Scoil Mhuire Clondra 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 16 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group and in relation to admission of students after the commencement of the school year.)

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.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the BOM in accordance with school policy. The BOM will notify parents of their decision within 21 days of the closing date for the receipt of applications.

The BOM will have regard for the relevant DoES guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and the health and welfare of children.

The BOM is bound by the DES Rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years. Children applying to enrol in Scoil Mhuire, Clondra must have reached the age of 4 years by August 31st of the year they will commence school.

10. 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 19 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Scoil Mhuire, Clondra 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.

12. 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, Clondra 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 11 above.
- (v) Where in the opinion of the Board of Management, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to school staff, school property, other pupils or their education.

13. 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).

14. 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, Clondra 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, Clondra 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.

15. 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 14.

16. 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:

All applications for admission which conform to our schools Annual Admissions 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. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the rules governing National Schools, School Management approval and local agreements with other schools.

Consideration will be given to respecting the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. We will be guided by the principles of natural justice and act in the best interest of all children. The Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom, bearing in mind:

1. Size of / available space in classroom.
2. Educational needs of children of a particular age.

3. Multi-grade classes.
4. Presence of children with special educational / behavioural needs.
5. D.E.S. guidelines.

Parents will be asked to fill in our enrolment form and accept our Code of Behaviour. Such applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis but will normally only be considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area.

In the case of pupils transferring from other countries however, experience has shown that it may take 2 to 3 weeks of assessment by the Scoil Mhuire, Clondra before suitable class level is determined.

Our normal selection criteria, as outlined in section 5, above, will also be taken into consideration.

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:

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. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the rules governing National Schools, as well as our own school's admissions policy, School Management approval and local agreements with other schools.

Consideration will be given to respecting the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. We will be guided by the principles of natural justice and act in the best interest of all children. The Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom, bearing in mind:

1. Size of / available space in classroom.
2. Educational needs of children of a particular age.
3. Multi-grade classes.
4. Presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs.
5. D.E.S. guidelines.

Parents will be asked to fill in our enrolment form and accept our Code of Behaviour–Such applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis but will normally only be considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area.

In the case of pupils transferring from other countries however, experience has shown that it may take 2 to 3 weeks of assessment by the Scoil Mhuire, Clondra before suitable class level is determined.

Our normal selection criteria, as outlined in section 5, above, will also be taken into consideration.

Junior Infants, with the exception of students transferring from another school, may only be admitted to the school prior to the start of the new school year.

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

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Clondra 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.

18. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Our school is of a Catholic ethos and, in keeping with that ethos, children of all or no other faith are welcome to apply to this school.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parent(s)/guardian(s) have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction (etc.) 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)/guardian(s) of the student, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

In many cases, where parents find it acceptable, the child/children can remain in their classroom and complete tasks/work assigned to them while religious instruction is undertaken with the rest of the class.

If this arrangement is not acceptable to parents, the child can be facilitated in one of the other classrooms. They will complete work/tasks assigned to them while under the supervision of the class teacher.

19 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 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.

20. Ratification and Communication:

The original policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 14th June 2002. It was reviewed in September 2004, October 2006, April 2008, October 2012 and May 2014.

This current review takes account of changes to the Education (Admission to Schools Act) 2018 which contains new processes around admission policies.

A copy of this policy will be made available to parents and will be published on our school website.

The contents of this policy have been approved on behalf of the Patron.