



### **Admission Policy of St Vincent's Special National School**

**School Address:** Navan Road, Dublin 7

**Roll number:** 19039I

**School Patron:** Archbishop of Dublin

**Trustees:** Daughters of Charity

#### **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 24<sup>th</sup> July 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 St Vincent's Special 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**

**St. Vincent's Special School** is a co-educational school for People with Intellectual Disabilities. The school is designated by the Department of Education and Skills as a Special School for pupils aged 5-18 years with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities, based on psychological testing. The school also has two special classes specifically catering for pupils with an additional diagnosis of Autism.

St. Vincent's School supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Equality of access and participation in the school (depending on resources available from the Department of Education and Skills)
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for delivery of values, beliefs, traditions, language and ways of life in society

#### **3. Admission Statement**

St Vincent's Special 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. St Vincent's Special 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. St Vincent's Special National School, is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education for students with a Moderate Intellectual Disability and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

St Vincent's Special National School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education for students, who on Psychological testing have a Moderate Intellectual Disability.

#### **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) St Vincent's Special National School, provides an education exclusively for students with moderate intellectual disability and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.
- d) St Vincent's Special 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:

1. All prospective school placements are assessed initially by the Daughters of Charity Admissions, Discharges and Transfers Committee (ADT). This is essential to ensure that the pupil applying for enrolment may be considered for the wider range of services including Clinical Support, possible Respite and Family Support Services. Pupils who apply directly to the school are re-directed to the ADT Committee by the Principal for the above reason. All available professional reports such as Psychiatric assessments, Psychological reports, Speech and Language reports, Social work reports, Occupational Therapy reports, Physiotherapy reports and Medical reports must be made available to the ADT Committee which is based at St. Vincent's Central Management Offices
2. Pupils must be 5 years of age on or by 1<sup>st</sup> September of the academic year in which they are applying. Pupils who have reached the age of 18 years on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August will be prepared for leaving the school.



3. All children applying for enrolment are assessed by a registered Psychologist in order to meet the criteria for enrolment. This report must state that the student is diagnosed with a Moderate Intellectual Disability. The NCSE requires that Psychological reports have been updated within two years.
4. The catchment area for St. Vincent's Special School is the Daughters of Charity designated area- catchment area 6 Dublin North West (formally LH06) (See map, Appendix 1). A pupil will only be considered for a school place if he/she lives within this designated catchment area.
5. There is a place available in an age appropriate class.
6. For admission to the Autism Classes, the child must meet the criteria under the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (V) or the child must be recommended by a Psychologist for placement in such a class. Priority is given to pupils currently enrolled within the school if movement to an autism specific class is required. Priority is also given to pupils currently enrolled within the school progressing from the junior to the senior autism class.
7. The child is already in receipt of services from the Daughters of Charity Services, i.e. Early Services; Mainstream Team or other Daughters of Charity Services.
8. The child can learn in a classroom environment with other children using an eclectic approach, suitable in the main body of the school or within the Autism classes
9. The school environment can meet the needs of the pupil profile.
10. The school has relevant available resources to meet the particular needs of the child.
11. The profile of the proposed class group is appropriate to the needs of the child

The Board of Management of St. Vincent's Special School reserves the right to refuse to enrol a pupil in rare and exceptional circumstances. Based on information in professional reports and/or from previous schools/centres, the grounds for refusal on exceptional circumstances include:

- The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and / or provide the pupil with an appropriate education.
- The pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils and may compromise their education.
- The pupil poses an unacceptable risk to school staff and / or school property.

When recognising the rights of the parents/guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St. Vincent's Special School has also a responsibility to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular the pupils already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and the best interests of all the pupils.

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:

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place in any of the selection criteria categories above a draw will be made using random selection. Parents/guardians will be invited to attend this draw. If a parent/guardian is unable to attend they may nominate someone to attend in their place. This draw will be overseen by an independent witness.



## **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, 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) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- (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.

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St Vincent's Special National 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 15](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 16](#) 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 St Vincent's Special National 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.



### **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 St Vincent's Special National 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 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.

### **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 St Vincent's Special 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 St Vincent's Special 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. 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. All applicants on the waiting list will be assigned an age/needs appropriate class, in the event a place becomes available throughout the year. There are four types of classes within the school; a junior autism specific class, a senior autism specific class, junior and senior moderate classes.

### **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.

### **15. 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: Due to the varying age groups of the applicants, it is likely that they will require entry to classes other than the junior room. The applicant will be considered for a space if a space becomes available in an age appropriate and suitable needs class. Priority is given to pupils enrolled within the school to transition to another class e.g. to the autism specific classes. All applicants on the waiting list will be assigned an age/needs appropriate class, in the event a place becomes available throughout the year. There are four types of classes within the school; a junior autism specific class, a senior autism specific class, junior and senior moderate classes.

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

The Board of St Vincent's Special 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**

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) Parents can request in writing that their child does not participate in religious instruction or events and will be provided with an alternative educational opportunity.

## **18. 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 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 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.



**Ratification & Communication:**

These guidelines were ratified by the Board of Management following approval from the Patron on the 24th July 2020.

**Review Timetable:**

These guidelines will be reviewed in 2 years' time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

**Chairperson:** Brendan Hillery.

**Principal and Secretary to the Board of Management:** Cathy Cawley