



## **East Cork Community Special School**

### **Admissions Policy**

A decision on an application for admission will be based on the implementation of this policy, the information set out in the Annual Admissions Notice of the school and the information provided by the Applicant in the application for admission. Cork ETB and the Principal of East Cork Community Special School are responsible for the implementation of this Admission Policy.

## INTRODUCTION TO EAST CORK COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL

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In 2023, the Department of Education (DE) granted Patronage of a new special school in Cork County to Cork Education and Training Board (Cork ETB).

East Cork Community Special School (East Cork CSS) is a Community Special School that currently provides an appropriate education for students, aged 4 to 18 years old, who have a diagnosis of Autism and moderate learning disability, who require the support of a special school setting. The student must have reached 4 years on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August of the school academic year for which they seek enrolment. To facilitate this age band, the range of classes extend from primary to post primary and are based on relevant and appropriate peer groupings and the individual needs of each child. As per DE regulations, students will leave school at the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 18 years old.

The school operates within the regulations as outlined by the Rules for National Schools and relevant circulars and directives issued by the Primary/Special Education sections of the Department of Education. The school is funded by grants from the Department of Education. Staffing allocations are in line with those set out by the Department of Education. The Board of Management is made up of representatives of the Patron, parents, school staff and the community.

East Cork CSS delivers the curriculum as prescribed by the Department of Education and adapted to meet the educational needs of each student. A variety of methodologies and strategies are adopted to maximise the students' learning potential. Supported by the child's multidisciplinary team, the teachers and staff provide a caring and challenging learning environment which fosters personal, social and academic development. All students have an Individual Educational Plan designed specifically for them.

Our school is a place where everyone feels a sense of belonging and ownership. The school is characterised by respectful and positive relationships which support the dignity of every individual. We are committed to ensuring a safe environment where our students can maximise

their potential. Forging meaningful relationships with the students, their parent(s)/guardian(s) and all involved in their care and education, is essential to ensuring a quality educational experience for our learners.

This policy aims to have in place, appropriate procedures that enable the school to make decisions on all applications seeking admission to our school in an open and transparent manner consistent with legislative requirements. It also aims to make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants within the resources available to it.

All decisions on places are contingent on the availability of a suitable vacancy relevant to the educational needs and age of an applicant.

Class groupings vary each year as students move to other schools. While the school may choose to move students from one class to another if their needs would be better met, it is not guaranteed and parents/guardians do not have a right to have students moved to a class of their choosing.

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## 1. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**'Applicant'** means the parent(s) / guardian(s) of a Child who has made an application for admission to East Cork CSS.

**'Child'** means the person in respect of whom the application is being made.

**'Student'** means the person in respect of whom an offer of admission by the school has been accepted on behalf of the Child.

**'Gender'**, in line with the definition of "*the gender ground*" in the Equal Status Act 2000, is such that "*one is male and the other is female*". This does not prejudice any Child who is Intersex or identifies as Androgynous/Androgyne, Bigender, Demi gender, Gender Fluid, Genderqueer, Multigender, Neutrois, Non-binary, Transgender, Transsexual or otherwise.

**'Catchment Area'** refers to the designated residential area for application to East Cork CSS in respect of the person on whose behalf the application is being made.

**'Parent'** has the same meaning as in the Education Act 1998 and includes a foster parent and a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997.

**"NCSE"** means the National Council for Special Education.

**"Board"** the Board of Management

**"ETB"** means Education and Training Board.

## 2. ADMISSION STATEMENT

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### School Ethos and Characteristic Spirit

East Cork Community Special School is a state, multid denominational, co-educational school underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Respect
- Community



In East Cork CSS, all students are given equal opportunity for enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018 and the criteria set out in this policy. Once enrolled, East Cork CSS strives to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. All members of our school community are treated equitably, regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, disability or socio-economic status.

Our school provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. It strives to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents/guardians and staff.

Students of all religions and beliefs are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and beliefs.

Accordingly, East Cork CSS shall not discriminate in its admission of a Child based on the following grounds:

- 2.1. Gender of the Child or Applicant
- 2.2. Civil status of the Applicant
- 2.3. Family status of the Child or Applicant
- 2.4. Sexual orientation of the Child or Applicant
- 2.5. Religion of the Child or Applicant
- 2.6. Disability of the Child or Applicant
- 2.7. Race of the Child or Applicant
- 2.8. The Child's or Applicant's membership of the Traveller community
- 2.9. Special educational needs of the child or applicant.

East Cork CSS is a special school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education, currently caters for students who have a diagnosis of Autism and moderate learning disability. Thereby, it does not discriminate by refusing enrolment to a pupil/student who does not have autism and moderate learning disability.

East Cork CSS shall not charge fees or payments or seek contributions as a condition of admission or continued enrolment of a Child.

In line with Circular 0075/2022, and the Commencement of the Education (Provision in respect of children with Special Educational Needs) 2022 and the commencement of remaining sections of the Education [Admission to Schools) Act 2018, East Cork Community Special 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 education needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

East Cork Community Special School will comply with any direction served on the patron or board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(48) of the Education Act.

### **3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

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Cork Education and Training Board (Cork ETB) was established under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 which sets out the functions of all ETBs, including to establish and maintain recognised schools, centres for education and education and training facilities in each ETB's functional area.

The Board of Management (BoM) of East Cork CSS is a Committee established under Section 44 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and constitutes a Board of Management within the meaning of the Education Act 1998.

The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Education Act 1998 place a duty on all recognised schools to prepare and publish an Admission Policy.

The Education Act, 1998 provides for an appeal process in the event of a refusal to enrol. The appeal process is set out in section 5.2 in respect of applications made to East Cork CSS.

Section 62(7)(n) of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 requires each school to set out in its Admission Policy the arrangements it has in place where a parent requests their child to opt-out of religious instruction. However, East Cork CSS does not provide religious instruction within the school day, therefore the need to make alternative arrangements does not arise.

East Cork CSS 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. This relates to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

East Cork CSS will comply with any direction served on the patron or the Board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.”



## 4. GENERAL ADMISSION PROVISIONS

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In the admission process, consideration will be given to ensuring that a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff prevails.

A decision on an application for admission shall be based on:

- the implementation of this Admissions Policy
- the annual Admissions Notice of the school
- availability of a place in an appropriate class

In processing an application East Cork CSS shall not consider:

- 4.1 The payment of fees or contributions to the school.
- 4.2 A Child's academic ability, skills or aptitude; unless it is necessary to ascertain whether or not the Child has the category of Special Educational Needs concerned for admission to a school approved by the Minister of Education providing education exclusively to Students with a specified category of Special Educational Needs.
- 4.3 The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a Child's Parent(s)/Guardian(s).
- 4.4 A Child's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service.
- 4.5 A requirement that a Child or his or her Parent(s)/Guardian(s), attend an interview, open day or other meeting, as a condition of admission.
- 4.6 A Child's connection to the school due to a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school apart from where the applicant has a sibling currently attending.
- 4.7 The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school as long as it is received during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual Admissions Notice for that academic year.

East Cork CSS will consider the offer of a place to every Child seeking admission to the school, unless the following applies:

- 4.8 The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) fails to confirm in writing that, s/he accepts the School's Code of Behaviour Policy and shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the Child if the Child becomes a student in the school.
- 4.9 The Child seeking admission to the school does not have the category of special educational need specified by the Minister of Education in respect of the school.

In a case where the school is oversubscribed, the selection criteria outlined in this policy will be applied to each application.

## **5. APPLICATION TO EAST CORK CSS**

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### **5.1 Admission Provisions**

- 5.1.1 Oversubscription
- 5.1.2 Selection criteria
- 5.1.3 Selection process
- 5.1.4 Late applications
- 5.1.5 Second and subsequent rounds of offers of a place
- 5.1.6 Acceptance of a place
- 5.1.7 Refusal
- 5.1.8 Withdrawal of an offer

### **5.2 Appeals**

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- 5.2.2 Appeal where Refusal was for a Reason other than Oversubscription
- 5.2.3 Basis for Appeal

## 5.1 Admission Provision

East Cork CSS is established to cater for the special educational needs of students, aged between 4 to 18 years old, who have a diagnosis of Autism and moderate learning disability, who require the support of a special school setting. Only applications, in respect of children whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the school, will be considered.

East Cork CSS may refuse admission to a child where the child does not have a report from a psychologist or a psychiatrist stating that s/he has a diagnosis of Autism and moderate learning disability, who require the support of a special school setting and the reasons why this is the case.

All enquiries, referrals and applications for admission to East Cork CSS are considered in a fair and equitable manner. A copy of this Admissions Policy will accompany the application form sent to the Parent. An Application Form for admission is only considered valid and complete when all required documentation, outlined below, is received by the school.

- Recent psychological assessment reports if available or a report from a relevant professional confirming and making a clear recommendation which states that the student requires a special school setting and the reasons why this is the case
- Fully completed Admission Application Form signed by Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Original birth certificate

Other recent relevant professional reports if available may be submitted. These include:

- Up to date records from Child's present/previous school/pre-school with details of the learning and social development of the child and any other matters of relevance
- Behavioural Support Plans indicating programme and ongoing support needed for the child
- Individual Education Plan/Student Support Plan
- Multi-Disciplinary Team Reports
- Speech and Language Report
- Physiotherapy Report
- Occupational Therapy Reports

- Psychiatric Assessment

Completion of an Application Form for Admission does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.

### **5.1.1 Oversubscription**

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 5.1.2 below will apply and a waiting list shall be compiled which shall remain valid only for the school year in respect of which the applications are made.

Where the number of applicants under any individual criteria listed at 5.1.2 has the effect of exceeding the total number of places available in the school, places will be offered based on a lottery draw. Taking each subsequent criteria in sequence, a lottery draw will be used to determine the placing of applicants on the waiting list.

Where further school places become available during the academic year, offers will be made in accordance with the availability of a place in the particular class group and the order of priority in which children have been placed on the waiting list

For the avoidance of doubt, if a Child does not receive a place in the school for a given academic year, but s/he wishes to be considered for admission the following academic year, a new application must be made on behalf of that Child during the dates specified by the school as being the period when it will accept applications. If a student is entered on a waiting list for a particular academic year, this will not give him/her any priority for entry in the academic year commencing the following September.

Where the school is oversubscribed, any selection criteria that are not included in this Admissions Policy shall not be considered in determining whether or not a Child is admitted to the school.

### **5.1.2 Selection Criteria**

Applications to the school will only be considered if the Child's needs fall within the specified category of special educational needs provided for by the school. East Cork CSS currently caters for the special educational needs of students, aged between 4 to 18 years old, who have a diagnosis of Autism and moderate learning disability, who require the support of a special school setting. Only applications, in respect of children whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the school, will be considered.

Subject to this requirement, in the event of oversubscription, the following criteria for admission will apply:

- 5.1.2.1 Siblings of students currently enrolled in the school and whose needs fall within the specified category of special education needs provided for by the school.
- 5.1.2.2 Qualifying applicants whose normal place of residence is within the boundary of the catchment area of the school (the catchment area is defined as being Cork City and Cork County), currently without an offer of a place in a mainstream school special class or a special school for September 2023, and who have a recommendation for a special school placement.
- 5.1.2.3 Qualifying applicants whose normal place of residence is within the boundary of the catchment area of the school (the catchment area of the school is defined as being Cork City and Cork County).
- 5.1.2.4 All other qualifying applicants.

### **5.1.3 Late Applications**

An application received by East Cork CSS after the closing date published by the school and set out in the Admissions Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admissions Policy.

Where East Cork CSS is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, that application will receive a place on the waiting list beneath Applicants whose applications were received by the school on or before the closing date for applications. Such late applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the school and subsequently the school's selection criteria will be applied in accordance with this Admissions Policy.

#### **5.1.4 Second and subsequent rounds of offers of a Place**

Where a Child is in receipt of an offer of a place within East Cork CSS but does not accept the offer, or fails to accept within the specified time period, or the school withdraws the offer in line with the relevant provisions of this policy, the place will be offered to the next Child on the waiting list. This process will continue throughout the second and subsequent rounds of offer of places until all places within the school have been filled.

#### **5.1.6 Acceptance of a Place**

If the Child in respect of whom the application is made, is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with a Letter of Offer and Acceptance Form by the school. Other forms such as the School Code of Behaviour, NCSE Notification of Enrolment in Special School and NCSE School Transport Forms will also be issued, in due course.

The Applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the school's Admissions Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school.

Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school by the date set out in the school's Admissions Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for refusal as set out below.

### **5.1.7 Refusal**

Where a Child in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 5.1.7.1 The reasons that the Applicant was not offered a place in East Cork CSS.
- 5.1.7.2 Details of the Applicant's place on the waiting list.
- 5.1.7.3 Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision.

### **5.1.8 Withdrawal of an Offer**

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- 5.1.8.1 The information contained in the application form is false or misleading in a material respect,  
**or**
- 5.1.8.2 The Applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual Admissions Notice of the school for the academic year for which s/he is applying, or in the case of a late application, or second/subsequent round offer, within 2 weeks,  
**or**
- 5.1.8.3 An Applicant has not indicated:
  - (i) whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s);  
**and**
  - (ii) whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).

If an offer of a place is withdrawn by the school, the Child on whose behalf the application was made shall lose his/her place on the admission list or waiting list for that academic year and any subsequent applications for the same academic year on behalf of that Child shall be treated as a late application in line with section 5.1.4 above.



## **5.2 Appeals**

### **5.2.1 Appeal where Refusal was Due to Oversubscription**

An Applicant who was refused admission because the school is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this, must first seek a review by the school's Board of Management. The request for this review must be made in writing to the school's Board of Management within 21 calendar days from the date of the decision to refuse admission to the school. The date of decision is the date shown on the correspondence from the school containing the decision to refuse admission. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal, is specified by the Minister for Education after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

The School Review Form is available from Cork ETB and from the East Cork CSS portal on the Cork ETB website [www.corketb.ie](http://www.corketb.ie).

If an Applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the Board of Management, or the Board of Management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the Applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals Committee established by the Minister for Education under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **5.2.2 Appeal where Refusal was for a Reason other than Oversubscription**

An Applicant who was refused admission to East Cork CSS for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may seek a review by the school's Board of Management or alternatively proceed directly to an appeal by an appeals Committee established by the Minister for Education under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

If an Applicant wishes to seek a review by the Board of Management, the request must be made in writing within 21 calendar days from the date of the decision to refuse admission to the school. The date of decision is the date shown on the correspondence from the school containing the decision to refuse admission. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal, is specified by the Minister for Education after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead. The School Review Form is available on the East Cork CSS portal of the Cork ETB website [www.corketb.ie](http://www.corketb.ie).

If an Applicant proceeds directly to an appeals Committee, this request must be made in writing on a Section 29 Appeal Form, available from the Department of Education website, any time after the decision to refuse admission to the school was made, but no later than 63 days from the date of the decision to refuse admission.

### **5.2.3 Basis for Appeal**

As required by section 29C (2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admissions Policy and the content of the school's Admissions Notice. It must set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.

### **6.1. 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 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 provided by the board may include all or any 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).

### **7.1 Review**

This policy will be reviewed as required, depending on the developing nature of the school. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: **10.10.2024**

**Signed by the Chairperson of the Board of Management:**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Maria Mc Grath**