

Polasaí Rollacháin agus Rannphairtíochta Admissions and Participation Policy



Scoil Fhionáin
An Fál Carrach,
Co. Dhún na nGall
Roll no. 17704H

School Patron: Bishop Alan Mc Guckian, Diocese of Raphoe

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1. Introduction:

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 19/10/20, after a process which was developed since March 2020, using the mandatory template supplied by Diocese of Raphoe. 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 Fhionáin 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.

The Chairperson Fr. James Gillespie and the Principal Caitríona 'Uí Cheallaigh will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

2. Characteristic Spirit and General Objectives of Scoil Fhionain:

Scoil Fhionáin is a Co-Educational, Gaeltacht, Catholic Primary School under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Raphoe, Bishop Alan Mc Guckian. Our school plan is underpinned by its Catholic ethos, which, in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and

(d) 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 Fhionáin 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 school promotes and expects an acceptance of those with different or no religious beliefs.

Our mission is to provide a safe, stimulating learning environment where children's emotional, psychological, physical and moral development is catered for in addition to academic progress.

A positive school culture is fostered through Social, Personal and Health Education, the foundation of a vibrant Student Council, participation in environmental awareness projects such as the Green Flag, so that our pupils respect each other and the beliefs of their fellow pupils. There is an active Student Council and Parents'/Guardians' Association in Scoil Fhionáin.

Tá an scoil cláraithe sa Scéim Aitheantais Gaeilge, agus mar chuid do sin, tá Plean Gaeilge faoi leith againn, ina mbeidh an luath-thumoideachas ag tosú i Meán Fómhair 2019 do Naíonáin Shóisearacha, agus ag leanúint ar aghaidh de réir a Chéile, céim ar chéim.

Scoil Fhionáin is registered as a Gaeltacht School, and as such, is engaging in the Irish Language immersion programme, beginning with Junior Infants in 2019/20.

The School at present has eleven teachers, including the Principal, Deputy Principal and two teachers supporting children with additional needs. We have a shared Múinteoir Tacú Gaeilge, two part-time SET teachers and a Cúntóir Teanga Gaeilge, provided by Muintearas Teo.

We follow the curricular programmes as laid down by the Dept. of Education and Science. The school depends on funds from the Dept. of Education and Science for its operation and functioning. School policies and services provided must have regard to the resources and funding available.

School hours are 9.30 am. to 2.00 pm. for Infant classes, and 9.30 am. to 3.00pm. for all other classes, with school day officially commencing at 9.20am.

Scoil Fhionáin is bound by the Dept. of Education and Skills Rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years from 1st September and upwards.

Scoil Fhionáin is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does/will 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.

Scoil Fhionáin is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

Inclusion is central to our values in Scoil Fhionáin, and we are mindful of the need to provide for the education of children with additional needs, supported by the Special Educational Needs Officer, staff and pupils.

3. Admission Statement:

Scoil Fhionáin 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 Fhionáin 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.

Scoil Fhionáin 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 Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. *

Scoil Fhionáin is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

**This is a mandatory requirement in policy as per patron’s template.*

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

Scoil Fhionáin, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism.

An additional policy Admissions and Participation – Class for Pupils with Autism, has been created in preparation for the proposed opening of the Autism Class in Scoil Fhionáin. Procedures and guidelines from this policy will be implemented as per Scoil Fhionáin Admission and Participation policy.

This 'Admissions and Participation Policy- class for pupils with Autism' is available on the school website, and may also be had in hardcopy from the school Principal/ office on request.

5. Admission of Students

The annual admissions process shall commence with the publication of the school's "Annual Admissions Notice" in the 'Donegal News' local newspaper, Naomh Fionán Parish Bulletin and on the school website, www.scoilfhionain.ie , at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned. This public notice shall inform prospective parents/guardians of the application process, key dates and the number of places available

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.

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

The special class attached to Scoil Fhionáin provides an education exclusively for students with Autism and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

**This is a mandatory requirement in policy as per patron's template.*

6. Oversubscription

Depending on circumstances such as available space, educational needs and where there are multigrade classes, the Board of Management *may* be required to set a maximum number for class size.

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. Siblings of pupils already enrolled in school.
2. Pupils from parish of St. Fionán catchment.
3. Children of staff of Scoil Fhionáin.
4. All other applicants.

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:

- D.O.B. with place given to older applicant.
- Applicant residing closest to school (from parish of St Fionán)as the crow flies.
- Siblings already enrolled in school.

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, 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;
(other than in relation to:
 - admission to (a) a special school or (b) a special class 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;
(other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) 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, other than to decide a 'tie' on one of the selection criteria for resolving oversubscription, as referred to at Paragraph 6 above.'

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).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Scoil Fhionáin shall be made by the board of management and will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see [section 14- Late Applications](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15-](#) (b) and (c) below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group- i.e applications to years other than Junior Infants, and applications after commencement of 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.

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 Scoil Fhionáin, 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 Scoil Fhionáin 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.

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;
- (v) 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).

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 Scoil Fhionáin 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 Fhionáin 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.

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.

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 13.

15.Procedures for admission of students to Junior Infants, other years and during the school year:

(a) Junior Infant Enrolments:

1. Parents/ guardians seeking to enrol their child(ren) in Scoil Fhionáin are requested to return a completed Enrolment Application Form with an original Birth Certificate to the school by end of February each year. Enrolment Application Forms will be available from the school in February. Birth Certificates will be photocopied and returned.
2. The names of children for whom completed Enrolment Application forms and Birth Certificates have been returned, will be placed on a class waiting list. Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of

Management of the school in accordance with school policy. As a general principle and in so far as practicable, having regard to the school's Admissions and Participation Policy, children will be enrolled on application, provided that there is a place available and that parents / guardians have agreed to the School policy on Code of Conduct and Discipline.

3. There is a Registration Day in February of each year. Notification will be given in advance in the Naomh Fionán parish bulletin, "Donegal News" and the school website, www.scoilfhionain.ie.
4. The closing date for applications is end March of each school year. Following receipt of applications, parents and guardians will receive a letter of offer of place in Scoil Fhionáin.
This must be accepted or declined by parent/guardian.
Scoil Fhionain may then request, any psychological assessment/reports which will assist us in providing support and educational provision for child.
5. On completion of Enrolment Form the parents / guardians and their child / children will be invited to visit the school for an afternoon in June. Children will meet with their teacher and the principal and SET teacher will meet the parents/ guardians with the purpose to give as much information as possible pertaining to the school and answer any queries that may be raised. Parents/guardians will be given a booklet containing information about the school and suggestions on "Preparing Your Child for School." School will open to Junior Infant pupils in late August of each year.
6. In the case of pupils to be enrolled in class for pupils with Autism Needs, it will be necessary to seek School Transition Statement from Early Intervention Team recommending such a placement for pupil, in order to secure a place.

(b) 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:

- An application form will be filled in by prospective parent/guardian and returned with a copy of child's birth cert and PPSN. Enrolment will take place following the procedures set in place by this policy.

(c) 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:

- As above, an application form will be filled in by prospective parent/guardian and returned with a copy of child's birth cert and PPSN. Enrolment will take place following the procedures set in place by this policy.

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

The board of Scoil Fhionáin 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/guardians have 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 written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. The principal and class teacher will discuss with the parent/guardian the specific alternative arrangements that will be put in place for their child during periods of religious instruction.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian of 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 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.

Revised December 2018, amended in April 2020, September 2020 as per Raphoe Diocesan template.

Ratification

This revised policy was approved at a meeting of BOM on 9/6/2020 and updated and reviewed in Dec 2021

Signed Fr James Gillespie Chairperson BOM. Date 07/12/21

Scoil Fhionáin