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Admissions Policy of St. Kevin's G.N.S.

School Patron: Catholic Archbishop of Dublin

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/guardians of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 26th May 2023. 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. Kevin's G.N.S. admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Kevin's G.N.S. is an all-girls' primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

"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:

- (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 St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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.

Our School Vision:

The vision of the Board of Management and staff of St. Kevin's G.N.S. is for a warm and welcoming school, where each child feels secure, cherished and challenged. We aim to give each child a sense of their own worth and uniqueness while instilling in them an attitude of respect and kindness towards all. We aim to empower them to meet, with confidence, the challenges of life now and in the future. We hope to achieve this in an environment of co-operation, supported by the entire school community.

Our School Mission:

The Board of Management and staff of St. Kevin's G.N.S. ensure that a positive ethos, reflecting Christian attitudes and values, permeates all school activities. We strive for high academic standards and the development of age-appropriate social skills. At all times, we are aware of the enhancement of the self-esteem of each child. Therefore, in the area of discipline, we focus on correcting the actions of the child and avoid personal criticism. We strive to foster an accepting, encouraging and respectful atmosphere for all, with the engagement of all partners including our pupils, their families, the parish and wider community, our Parents' Association and Board of Management.

The specific aims and general objectives pursued by our school are those outlined in the document below; pages 34 to 37.

https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/c4a88a62-7818-4bb2-bb18-4c4ad37bc255/PSEC_Introduction-to-Primary-Curriculum_Eng.pdf

3. Admission Statement

St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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', '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. Kevin's G.N.S. is an all-girls' school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

St. Kevin's G.N.S., with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with complex educational needs arising from their diagnosis of autism who at this time are unable to access a mainstream class setting. The class is intended for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism meeting DSM IV/5 or ICD diagnostic criteria.

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

Students with complex educational needs arising from their diagnosis of autism who at this time are unable to access a mainstream class setting. The class is intended for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism meeting DSM IV/5 or ICD diagnostic criteria.

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/guardian 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. In order to protect the rights of children, teachers and others who work in schools, the school has a code of behaviour, drawn up by staff in consultation with parents/guardians and ratified by the Board of Management. Our code of behaviour is available to view on our school website; www.stkevinsgns.com or in hard copy from the school office on request.

Procedures relating to suspension and expulsion are outlined in the code, in line with Department of Education & Skills guidelines.

- c) St. Kevin's G.N.S. is an all-girls' school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.
- d) St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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.
- e) St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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.

6. Oversubscription

Classes in St. Kevin's G.N.S. school are deemed full when there are 30 children in the class group and/or the cumulative needs of the individual pupils in the class group can be

accommodated. This may be subject to review by the Board of Management. The maximum in the Special class is 6.

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:

For all classes except the Special Class

Criteria for Decision-Making - Prioritised:

- 1) Children who live within the traditional parish boundary of Kilnamanagh as defined in 2008 before the suppression of the parish and the creation of the new parish of Kilnamanagh/Castleview and sisters of current pupils of St Kevin's G.N.S. or St. Kevin's Boys' School.
- 2) Children of current staff in St Kevin's G.N.S. or St. Kevin's Boys' Schools.
- 3) Children who live in the parish of Kilnamanagh/Castleview.
- 4) All other children who apply.

In the event of oversubscription, preference will be given to older children within a category.

For the Special class when a place becomes available -

1. Priority at all times will be given to existing pupils in St. Kevin's G.N.S. who meet the criteria for entry into the special class and whose parents/guardians have applied for such a place.

2. Second priority will be given to pupils currently attending ABACAS Special School who are deemed suitable for mainstream placement in a special class, and whose parents support and request such a transfer.

3. Once applications from these two priority groups have been exhausted, applications from categories 2,3,4 and 5 above will be examined.

4. Applications from Category 6 children will then be considered. These applications will be processed in the following way –

Each application will be considered in the light of the following factors

1. The pupil's age.
2. The pupil's school history.
3. The impact of ASD on the child's communication skills and behaviour as outlined by his reports and/or reports from his current educational setting. This impact is evaluated to assess the likely potential for mainstream class integration.
4. The distance from the school to the pupil's home address.

Using these factors as a guide the school Principal in consultation with the school's SET team will propose to the Board of Management that a place/places be offered to the pupil(s) who would best match the profile of the existing class members in terms of forming meaningful instructional groups.

There is not a facility to defer places offered from one year to the following year. (Each year applications will be dealt within the context of a single school year)

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:
There will be a draw by lottery.

5) 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
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions to the school
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude (other than in relation to admission to 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 by being the sibling of a current pupil of St. Kevin's G.N.S. or St. Kevin's Boys' 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.

8) Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Kevin's G.N.S. will be based on the following:

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

(Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 14 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.

- **St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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.**
- **St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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.**

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. Kevin's G.N.S., 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.
- (ii) whether or not you have applied for and are 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. Kevin's G.N.S. where—

- (i) Fully completed application form and developmental checklist, and all requested accompanying documentation (as outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice) were not received within the correct timeframe (as outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice).
- (ii) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) the parent /guardian 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
- (v) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 9 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;
- (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).

13)Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications in the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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.

In the case of Junior Infants where they have not previously attended school in a Junior Infant setting, or an equivalent formal school setting outside the state, their name will be removed from the waiting list after 30th September.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Kevin's G.N.S. 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.

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.

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 a 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 other years and during the school year

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to school Admissions policy, available space, and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Skills; except where that pupil applies for admission to Junior Infants after 30th September where they have not previously attended school in a Junior Infant setting, or an equivalent formal school setting outside the state.

The Education Welfare Act (2000) contains some specific provisions in relation to the transfer of pupils, including the requirement that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress should be communicated between schools.

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:

- i. The parents of the child meet with the principal and discuss the reasons for the transfer.
- ii. The parents complete an application form.
- iii. The date on which the completed application form and required documents are submitted back to the school (see Appendix 1) is deemed to be the application date.
- iv. The principal of St. Kevin's contacts the school from which the pupil is transferring to verify application details.
- v. Applications are prioritised on the basis of application date.
- vi. Where places available cannot meet the demand for places in a specific class and applications are received on the same date then the applications are prioritised in the ranking detailed at Section 6 above.

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

The Board of St. Kevin's G.N.S., or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

17) Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents 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 parents/guardians, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

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 is 21 calendar days from the date of the letter of refusal from the school principal, 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.

19)Adoption of Admission Policy

This policy is open to review as required.

This policy was adopted by the board of management on

8th October 2020

Amended on 26th May 2023 and amended and ratified by the Board of Management on 7th February

Signed:

Charlie O'Connor

Chairperson - Board of Management

Appendix A – Details requested on Application form.

The following information and documentation will be required at application –

1. An original birth certificate must be provided with the application. If this certificate is not available a letter explaining the circumstances must be submitted to the Board of Management, through the principal teacher.

2. Proof of address will be required at application – a utility bill (Gas, Electricity or Landline telephone bill) in a parent's name, dated within the previous four months is acceptable. The Board reserves the right to look for further clarification or proof of residence in certain cases.

3. The application will request the following information –

a) The pupil's name, age, address, and parents' contact telephone numbers and email details;

b) The names and address of the pupil's parent(s) or guardian(s);

c) Names of siblings attending / siblings who previously attended

d) Contact telephone numbers in case of emergency;

e) Details of any medical conditions of which the school should be aware;

f) Details of any specific family situation which might affect the child's performance at school;

g) Details of developmental history & reports on same where concerns exist

h) The child's religion;

i) Details of any previous school / preschool attended and reasons for transfer;

j) Any other relevant information (including any such information as may be prescribed under the Education Welfare Act 2000).

4. Incomplete applications cannot be accepted

Additional requirements/considerations for Special Class Applications & Placement.

1. Applications for St. Kevin's G.N.S. special class must be accompanied by a multi-disciplinary report with a diagnosis qualifying ASD and with a recommendation to attend an ASD class in a mainstream school (as required by NCSE). If the child has a comorbidity of which one is a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range. All above diagnoses must be made by a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.
2. A recent recommendation (within 2 years of proposed admission date) must be provided by the above professional indicating the suitability of the applicant for an ASD class placement in a mainstream school. A needs analysis/recommendation in respect of the child will be required by the above professional in order to provide the best education possible for the pupil in question.
3. The first year will be used to: Assess the child's needs, develop an IEP to address the pupil's needs, and assess whether the child's placement is appropriate.
4. It is important that every child gets the best possible start in the class. Initial enrolment may be staggered, determined by the specific needs of the pupil.
5. Essential services are provided by the HSE such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Sensory Activities.
6. St. Kevin's G.N.S. does not offer or provide July provision in the school.
7. Discharge may be recommended for the pupil if the Board of Management determines that the placement is not appropriate for the pupil.
8. Discharge may be recommended for the pupil if the Board of Management determines that a pupil needs may be fully supported in a mainstream class.
9. The Board of Management will discharge pupils from the ASD class once they have reached the age of thirteen, or completed a schooling . Pupils already enrolled who reach the age of 13 after September 30th in any year will be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge the following year.
10. The parents/guardians of the child must accept, agree and sign the terms of the school's relevant behaviour policies and other relevant policies.

