

Admission Policy

Admission Policy of Sixmilebridge National School

School Address: Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare

Roll number: 16908S

School Patron/s: Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Killaloe

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 initially approved by the school patron on 16th December 2020 and is reviewed periodically. 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 Sixmilebridge 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

Sixmilebridge National School (also known as St. Finnachta's National School) is a mainstream co-educational, vertical primary school with Special Classes for Children with ASD situated in the town of Sixmilebridge Co. Clare.

"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, a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- b) Including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; 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;
- e) 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 Sixmilebridge National School 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.

While maintaining a strong Catholic tradition and ethos, the school welcomes children from all faith traditions. We believe that such diversity and inclusivity mean that all are enriched by the experience and culture of fellow human beings which is to the benefit of the common good.

3. Admission Statement

Sixmilebridge 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.

Sixmilebridge National School is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education, 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.

*Sixmilebridge 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.

*Note: The inclusion of the previous paragraph is mandated by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018. Although obliged by the State to include the previous paragraph, Sixmilebridge National School has never refused admission to any child on these grounds and does not envisage ever doing so, as to do so would be contrary to the inclusive and welcoming nature of the Catholic ethos of the school.

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

Sixmilebridge National School, with the approval of the Minister for Education, has established two special classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The special classes attached to Sixmilebridge National School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 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.

In considering applications for the special classes, the school will require a professional report from a HSE multi-disciplinary team, such as the Clare Children's' Services, which confirms that:

- a) The child has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- b) Placement in the special class is appropriate to the child's levels of abilities and needs

- c) That the professional report is a recent one. Where a report is more than two years old, the Principal may require an up-to-date professional report which accurately identifies the child's current abilities and needs.

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) An applicant for a place in a special class does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in the school's special classes
- d) Refusal to admit an applicant is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.
Sixmilebridge national school is a catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith 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:

A. Criteria for enrolment into Junior Infants in the mainstream setting in the event of oversubscription:

- i. Siblings of current and past pupils
- ii. Children living within the traditional catchment area of Sixmilebridge N.S. as defined by Parish boundaries and other local traditional catchment areas
- iii. Children of current school staff
- iv. Children whose parents or grandparents have attended the school (up to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice)
- v. 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:

Priority will be given to the eldest, except in criterion (v) where priority will be given to the child living in closest proximity to the school.

B. Criteria for enrolment into the Special Class for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the event of oversubscription:

- i. Siblings of current and past pupils
- ii. Children living within the traditional catchment area of Sixmilebridge N.S. as defined by Parish boundaries and other local traditional catchment areas
- iii. Children of current school staff
- iv. Children whose parents or grandparents have attended the school (up to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice)
- v. 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:

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above priority will be given to the eldest, except in criterion (vi) where priority will be given to the child living in closest proximity to the 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;
- 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 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 (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school. In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school will only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).
- g) The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.
This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned. This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Sixmilebridge National School will be based on the following:

- a) Our school's admission policy
- b) The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- c) 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](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#) 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 Sixmilebridge National School, you must indicate —

- a) 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
- b) 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 Sixmilebridge where —

- a) It is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- b) 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.
- c) 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
- d) An applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 4](#) 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 —

- a) An application for admission to the school has been received
- b) An offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- c) An offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- d) The date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- e) The date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- f) The date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- g) 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 Sixmilebridge 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 Sixmilebridge 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.

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 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:

- a) Applications will be considered in accordance with our school's admission policy and available places at each class level determined by the Board of Management following consideration of relevant factors e.g. needs of existing pupils, accommodation, health & safety considerations, number of existing pupils, provision of information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress etc.
- b) The school reserves the right to refuse to admit an applicant whose conduct in a previous school is deemed unsatisfactory.
- c) Any misleading or incorrect information given in any aspect to the application may render the application null and void.
- d) Children will be placed at an age-appropriate class level.
- e) In the event that any available places are 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 by the required closing date:
 - i. Former pupils returning from approved specialised education placements (i.e. Reading / Language Unit) in another mainstream school
 - ii. Siblings of current and past pupils
 - iii. Children living within the traditional catchment area of Sixmilebridge N.S. as defined by Parish boundaries and other local traditional catchment areas
 - iv. Children of current school staff
 - v. Children whose parents or grandparents have attended the school

- vi. 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 priority will be given to the eldest, except in criterion 6 where priority will be given to the child living in closest proximity to the school.

- f) 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:

Such applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis in accordance with our school's admission policy and admission will generally only be considered for the following times:

- i. The first day of the school year
- ii. The first school day of each week in September
- iii. The first school day following the Christmas break

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

The Board of Sixmilebridge 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 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) A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will be arranged with the parent(s)/ guardian(s) to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. Reviews/appeals

a) Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

b) 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.

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.

The policy was initially ratified by the Board of Management of Sixmilebridge National School on 21st December 2020.

Reviewed:

- **9th December 2021**
- **20th October 2022.**

The contents of this policy have been approved by St. Senan's Education Office (SSEO), acting on behalf of the Patron.

Signed:



Chairperson BoM

Date: 20th October 2022.