

ADMISSION POLICY



Coláiste Cholmcille
College Street
Ballyshannon
Co. Donegal

School Roll No: 91506V

School Patron/s: CE Donegal ETB and Bishops of Clogher and Raphoe

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 Coláiste Cholmcille (the “School”) has consulted with school staff, the school patrons and with parents/guardians of students attending the School.

The policy was approved by the school patrons on 1st September 2020 It is published on the school’s website and will be available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Coláiste Cholmcille’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.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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

Coláiste Cholmcille is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Bishop of Raphoe and Clogher and Donegal ETB.

Community Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Community Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened on 26 April 2002. Coláiste Cholmcille is an amalgamation of the Sacred Heart Secondary School, the De La Salle College and Ballyshannon Vocational School, built on a greenfield site in the centre of the town of Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. The values of Donegal ETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Mercy Sisters and the Bishops of Raphoe and Clogher are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Coláiste Cholmcille are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, our school Coláiste Cholmcille provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Our school Coláiste Cholmcille provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the

school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In Coláiste Cholmcille, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

3. Admission Statement

Coláiste Cholmcille 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.

Schools with special education class(es)

Coláiste Cholmcille 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 specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

Admission for Special Class/ ASD Unit

- If it is noted that individual students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may be more suitable to a full-time mainstream setting; any diagnosis will not automatically qualify a student for a place in either setting.
- Best practice indicates that a child with SEN should be educated in an inclusive environment with children that do not have such needs. However, in some cases, due to the nature of the child's needs, a mainstream setting may not be recommended. In such circumstances, the child's needs may be best met in a Special School setting.
- Parents/Guardians are required to contact the school well in advance of the admission process if they feel their child has ASD so that the school can establish resources required and seek allocation of appropriate resources.
- There will be an annual review of the student's placement within the ASD Class to ensure that the class continues to be the most suitable placement option available to the student.

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

Schools with special education class(es)

Coláiste Cholmcille with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Standard admission procedure policies apply in addition to the following:

- 1) The pupil has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Diagnosis (ASD) or Asperger's Syndrome (if diagnosed before May 2014) and it is recommended by the HSE Autism Services that an ASD Unit placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.
- 2) A recent psycho-educational report stating that the student is in the mild to above average range of intellectually ability.
- 3) A report from the student's primary school outlining the student's academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs and outlining the current extent of social integration.
- 4) Any other reports e.g. Speech and Language Report and/or OT Report should also be provided.

Coláiste Cholmcille is committed, within its limited resources, to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities or special educational needs. Students needs will be met in line with most recent Department Guidelines for allocation of resources. We strive to facilitate a smooth transfer from

Primary to Post-Primary education and to provide supports for these students throughout their time in the School.

Coláiste Cholmcille is committed to helping all students reach their full potential. Support teachers work closely with parents/guardians, other teachers, Year Heads, Management, Career Guidance, Chaplains and outside agencies.

However, there are exemptions from the general principles of discrimination under the Equal Status Act to the extent that compliance with any of its provisions in relation to a student with a disability would, by virtue of the disability, make it impossible, or have a detrimental effect on, the provision by an educational establishment of its services to other students.

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) School with special education class(es): The special class attached to Coláiste Cholmcille provides an education exclusively for students with Autistic 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

Coláiste Cholmcille offers a range of courses to its students:

- Junior Cycle to include (L1LP, L2LP & L3)
- Transition Year
- Senior Cycle
- Leaving Cert Applied
- Leaving Cert Vocational Programme
- Repeat Leaving Cert

For applications to specific courses offered in Coláiste Cholmcille please consult individual documentation for those courses on the website.

Eligibility for Enrolment

Students applying to Coláiste Cholmcille must fill out a school Application Form appropriate to their level and the course they wish to subscribe to.

Application procedure:

- The Board of Management will prepare an Annual Admission Notice, outlining specific information in respect of the application process for admission.
- Application Forms for school entrance are available from the School, or through the local national schools or at the school's Open Night as per the Annual Admission Notice.
- An annual **Open Day and Night** is held to provide information and a taster for incoming students. It is important for perspective parents/guardians to attend this meeting.

The following are required:

- Fully completed Application Form submitted **by the closing date** indicated on the form and Annual Admission Notice and accompanied by original Birth Certificate and two recent passport size photographs signed on the back by the student. Birth Cert will be copied and returned to parents.
- A copy of the Code of Behaviour must be signed by all incoming students and their Parents/Guardians as written confirmation that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and they "shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such a code by the child" (Education Welfare Act, 2000)
- **The fully completed Application Form should be signed and submitted to the School Office by 16:00pm on the closing date which is noted on the Application Form and the Annual Admission Notice and agreed, in advance, by the Board of Management (BOM) each year.**
- **Applications received after that date will be considered late for whatever reason and will only be considered after all other applicants have been processed.**
- All local primary schools are informed of relevant dates for the annual information evenings and open days after 1st Oct.
- Those not attending local primary schools can contact the school office for further information.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, Coláiste Cholmcille will apply the following selection criteria, in the order listed below, to decide admission. Applications

that are received after the closing deadline indicated in the Annual Admission Notice, are ineligible for this process.

Selection Criteria:

1. Siblings of pupils attending Coláiste Cholmcille
2. Siblings of past pupils of the school
3. Children and siblings of staff
4. Children attending the local feeder/primary school
5. Children who are resident in the local area and who do not fall into the categories stated in Point 1-4
6. Children of past pupils
7. Students whose parents choose Coláiste Cholmcille as a first preference
8. Lottery when all more rational methods have failed (which will be conducted in an open and transparent manner)

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:

School's arrangements:

- 1) Lottery when all more rational methods have failed (which will be conducted in an open and transparent manner)
- 2) Applicants will be placed on a waiting list

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) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
Other than in relation to:
 - admission to (a) 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.

- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; (other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criterion based on
- (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or
 - (2) parents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

- (f) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, (this is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the Annual Admission Notice of the school for the school year concerned and on the Enrolment Form).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Coláiste Cholmcille will be based on

- 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
- Where applicable, in the instance of an application to a special class, academic and behaviour passports from other schools.

All enrolments are subject to the approval of the Board of Management of Coláiste Cholmcille.

Coláiste Cholmcille may refuse enrolment to a student where:

- Number limits will be exceeded by accepting a student in a particular course, year group or class.
- The parent/guardian has not signed the Enrolment Form to indicate that they accept the school's Code of Behaviour.

In addition, Coláiste Cholmcille may refuse enrolment to a student to its special class where:

- The students' needs are such that, even with the additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and the HSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education
- In the opinion of the Principal, acting on behalf of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to themselves or others
- Enrolment would have a detrimental effect on the education of other students and/or the Health and Safety of students and staff.

(Please see [section 15](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 16 below](#) in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school Admission Policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

- Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within three weeks of the closing date outlined in the Annual Admission 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 based on the selection criteria, and in the case of oversubscription will include the student's place on the waiting list.
- Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right to appeal of the school 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 Coláiste Cholmcille, you must indicate:

(i) in writing, within two weeks, that the place offered will be accepted.

(ii) 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

(iii) 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.

(iv) Parents/Guardians who accept a place in the School must familiarise themselves with our Admission Policy and our Admissions Criteria as well as the school's Code of Behaviour. Parents/Guardians must sign that they have read our Code of Behaviour and support the school in its implementation. The Code of Behaviour can be found on the school website at www.ccbs.ie. A copy will be sent to all parents/guardians when a place is being offered.

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 Coláiste Cholmcille 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. See also (iv) below.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) The parent/guardian has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

The Board of Management reserve the right to limit the numbers that access a particular course, year group or class. This is reviewed on an annual basis.

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 Coláiste Cholmcille 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 Coláiste Cholmcille is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this Admission Policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought, will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the Annual Admission Notice and enrolment form will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

- The Board of Management will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to our school if there is a place on the programme and an availability of a suitable range of subjects.
- All applications to transfer to Coláiste Cholmcille are treated individually.

Please note the following:

- All applications are subject to any requirements contained in the School's Admission Policy.
- Signed acceptance of the Code of Discipline by both student and parents, even if the applicant is over 18 years of age.
- The presentation of a psychological report or medical report, if available.
- Consultation with EWO, if appropriate.
- In the case of the special class no application will be considered until all of the documentation is received. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within two weeks of the initial enquiry re transfer.

- In the event of oversubscription to other years and during the school year, priority will be given to applicants as per our Selection Criteria (see Section 6) a lottery will be used to separate applicants of equal standing.
- As soon as possible after enrolling a student from another second-level school, we will inform the Principal of the previous school of the enrolment.

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

Coláiste Cholmcille 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

Coláiste Cholmcille offers *religious education* in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, *religious education* supports the 'multi-denominational' aspect of our school's ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between '*religious education*' and '*religious instruction*':

- *Religious education* is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
- *Religious instruction* is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending Religious Education in the school. These arrangements will NOT result in a reduction in the school day of such students.

The school will seek to provide worship in accordance with rites, practice and teaching ethos of the religious denominations to which a pupil belongs.

Religious Education will be delivered **to all**.

If a parent wishes a student to be withdrawn from religious liturgy/worship they:

- Should schedule a meeting with school Chaplain
- Signal such a withdrawal in writing to the Board of Management of the School

18. Reviews/appeals

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

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

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

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent/guardian of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

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

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

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