

Common Application & Enrolment Policy

For

St. Brigid's & St. Patrick's NS, Bóthar Brugha, Drogheda

St. Joseph's CBS, Sunday's Gate, Drogheda

St. Oliver's NS, Ballymakenny Rd, Drogheda

Presentation Girls' Primary School, Ballymakenny Rd, Drogheda

SECTION 1

General and Legal Principles

Introduction

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Boards of Managements of all four stated national schools in Drogheda trust that by so doing, parents/guardians will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters.

The four schools in the Common Application Enrolment system are all situated in St. Peter's Parish Drogheda. The schools are Catholic schools under the patronage of Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh and as such aim to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils: cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with others.

The schools model and promote a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in Christian values. The Catholic school provides religious education and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

Bearing in mind the Catholic ethos of the school, every effort will be made so that the school is as inclusive as possible. While Catholic education and ethos permeates the day, children of other faiths or none, are welcome to apply to enrol. They may, on request, be excused from participation in formal religious instruction and Catholic activities. However, the school shall not be expected to excuse them from the class and or provide supervision for same while formal religious instruction and activities take place.

The four schools are:

St. Brigid's & St. Patrick's, Bothar Brugha, Drogheda

St. Joseph's CBS, Sunday's Gate, Drogheda

St. Oliver's NS, Ballymakenny Rd, Drogheda

Presentation Girls, Ballymakenny Rd, Drogheda

This policy has been drawn up by the Boards of the above named schools in consultation with the patron, the teaching staff and parents.

The schools support the principles of:

- Inclusiveness with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment within the procedures of common enrolment as detailed later in this document

Having regard to

- (a) the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act (1998), the Equal Status Acts (2000-2011) the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), The Education Welfare Act (2000), the Education Amendment Act (2012) and the Health and Safety at Work Act (2005).
- (b) the context and parameters of Departmental regulations and programmes,
- (c) the provisions of Section 14(b) (i) of The Equal Status Act 2000
- (d) the funding, teacher resources and accommodation available.
- (e) The Common Enrolment procedures later in this document.

The above schools operate under the Rules for National Schools (1965), The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), enacted sections of The Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004), all relevant equality legislation and Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circulars.

Policy Rationale

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the schools to make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with our ethos and legislative requirements.

Policy Aims

- * To enable applications for admissions to the schools to be handled in an open and transparent manner.
- * To outline a clear Application and Enrolment set of procedures.
- * To put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered.
- * To ensure that these criteria are informed by our Ethos, and current legislation.
- * To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application

General School Information

1. St. Brigid's & St. Patrick's NS

Address: Bóthar Brugha, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Roll Number: 18098T & 17949O

Denominational Character: Catholic

Tel: (041) 9837133 & (041) 9832800

School Status: DEIS Band 2

Gender: Coeducational (boys & girls) commencing September 2017

St. Brigid's & St. Patrick's schools will amalgamate in 2018, developing naturally to become a complete vertical coeducational school in September 2021. Parents will have the option of children remaining in the school until sixth class (subject to the availability of places) or transferring to Presentation/ St. Joseph's as heretofore.

2. St. Joseph's CBS

Sunday's Gate, Drogheda

Roll No: 17059E

Denominational Character: Catholic

Tel: 041 9833620

School Status: DEIS Band 2

Gender: Boys

From September 2018 parents have the option of enrolling boys in junior infants in the school (subject to the availability of places), growing naturally to become a complete vertical boys school (junior infants to sixth class).

3. St. Oliver's NS

Address: Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda

Roll No: 20349H

Tel: 041 9804578

Denominational Character: Catholic

Gender Orientation of School: Co-Educational (boys & girls)

St. Oliver's to continue as a vertical coeducational school as heretofore.

4. Presentation Girls' Primary School

Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda

Roll No: 00851c

Tel: 041 9837119

Denominational Character: Catholic

School Status: DEIS Band 2

Gender Orientation of School: Girls

From September 2018 parents have the option of enrolling girls in junior infants in the school (subject to the availability of places), growing naturally to become a complete vertical girls school (junior infants to sixth class).

Offers of Places – General Statement:

The schools shall provide for an offer of placement to all pupils seeking admission save:

- (1) Where the number of pupils seeking admission is greater than the numbers of places being made available by the schools, or
- (2) In accordance with Section (7) of the Equal Status Act 2000¹
- (3) Where the parents of a pupil do not agree to confirm in writing that the school's code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code,
- (4) Where An Garda Siochana or the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) has provided in writing to the school its opinion that the admission of the student could have a seriously detrimental effect on the safety of other students and or staff of the school.

¹ Explanatory note

Section (7) of the Equal Status Act 2000 makes provision among other issues for the fact that schools do not discriminate against a pupil in terms of admission/ access/ participation/ suspension/ expulsion to the extent that compliance with any provisions in relation to a pupil with a disability would by virtue of the disability, make impossible, or have a seriously detrimental effect on, the provision by an educational establishment of its services to other pupils.

SECTION 2

Common Application and Enrolment Procedures

Application/Enrolment Procedures

Introduction

Children applying to enrol/being enrolled in any of the schools in this common enrolment system must have reached the age of 4 years by 1st September of the year they will commence school.

All offers of enrolment are subject to signed acceptance of the School's Code of Behaviour, a copy of which is available from each school or can be downloaded from each school's website. Applicants who are known to have a record of serious assault towards other pupils/staff in a previous school and or who have a record of having caused serious damage to school property may have their applications refused.

The Boards of Management respect the rights of parents and will make balanced judgements guided by the principle of natural justice, while always acting in the best interest of the children.

While recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Boards of Management must consider the rights of the existing school communities and in particular the children already enrolled.

The schools' admission policy will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of:

1. the student having a disability or other special educational needs
2. the student's sexual orientation
3. the student's Family Status
4. the student being a member of the Traveller community
5. the student's race;
6. the student's gender;
7. the student's faith or religious tradition;
8. the student having no faith.

Junior Infants Enrolment

Enrolment of children for Junior Infants will take place during the month of February of the year when they will commence school. Information about this will be communicated by the Boards of Management to the school community through appropriate channels: the school-newsletter; the Parish Bulletin; the local newspaper; and through notes from the school to parents and guardians regarding the application for enrolment procedures. There will also be a collective Open Day/Information Night for all schools in the Common Applications and Enrolment System.

Parents/Guardians will be advised that they can enrol children in line with the Common Enrolment Procedures. In the case of girls, in any of the three schools offering places to girls, and in the case of boys in any of the three schools offering places to boys.

Parents/Guardians of children who move into the area may apply to enrol children at any time during the school year in any of the schools, appropriate to the gender of their child, subject to any regulations the Department of Education and Skills may lay down under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In such cases children will be offered places in whichever school can best accommodate them under the terms of the Common Enrolment Procedures. Junior Infants will be accommodated in such circumstances only if they are aged four before the first of September previous to application.

Parents seeking to enrol their children in any of the schools participating in the Common Application and Enrolment System should complete an enrolment application form, enclosing an original birth/adoption certificate and proof of address (a utility bill), and send it to the school of their first choice.

Information to be provided by Parents/Guardians will be as required on the Application Form (see Appendices).

The Application form, Explanatory Notes, and Timeline regarding applications and procedures are to be found in the Appendices of this policy document.

A Registration Form also forms part of the enrolment procedure. This form will accompany the letter of offer that will be sent to parents/guardians of successful applicants. The completed registration form must be returned to the school which has made the offer within the timeline specified in the letter of offer. Failure to do so will be interpreted as a refusal of the offer to enrol.

The completion of an application form or the placement of your child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.

Decision Making

Final decisions in relation to applications for enrolment will be made by the Boards of Management of the schools participating in the Common Application and Enrolment System. An Enrolment Committee (see Appendices), set up by these boards to run this system, will manage the Common Applications and Enrolment Process, on behalf of the Boards of Management, in accordance with the procedures of this Common Applications and Enrolment Policy. It is always envisaged by the Boards of Management that the procedures and criteria set out in this policy document should be adhered to strictly.

Enrolment Procedures

One of the basic principles underpinning the Common Enrolment Procedures is to keep families in the same school while keeping a balance both in pupil and teacher numbers across all schools in the system to ensure the viability of all schools.

In the case where one or other of the schools is unable to accommodate Junior Infants, family members are to be offered enrolment in one of the other schools.

Where families have been enrolled in more than one school, subsequent members of those families will be offered places in the school the youngest member of the family attended.

Where Boards of Management are agreed, in accordance, with Circular letter 11/01 and Circular 10/67, that a child needs to repeat a class for educational reasons and a class does not exist in which a child can repeat in his own school; in these circumstances, that child (but not his/her siblings) may transfer to another gender appropriate school in the system.

Arising from these procedures the Board of each school will apply these criteria in enrolling children, particularly children for Junior Infants.

Criteria for Ordering Priority

If the number of applications for enrolment exceeds the number of places available in the school, priority will be decided as follows:

- 1. Children currently living within the boundaries of Saint Peter's Parish Drogheda, priority to the oldest.**
- 2. Siblings, including step/half siblings, of children currently enrolled in the school and children of all current school staff, priority to the oldest.**
- 3. Any remaining places will be allocated on a "Priority to the oldest" basis.**

Applications received after the final date for the receipt of applications will be added to the waiting list after on-time applications. These late applications will be ordered according to the date on which each application is received in the school. Two or more such applications received on the same date will be ordered in age order, priority to the oldest. Should places become available for applicants on the waiting list, they will be offered according to the applicant's ranking on the list.

Transfer of Pupils from 2nd to 3rd Class

When the new Common Applications and Enrolment System commences and when St. Patrick's and St. Brigid's have amalgamated and gone vertical, parents of the pupils in 2nd class, in the amalgamated school will be asked to choose whether they want their children to remain in their current school or to transfer to Presentation or St. Joseph's.

In the event that demand exceeds the number of available places in any school and agreement cannot be reached, places will be allocated on a lottery basis.

This process will continue for four years until all schools in the system have completed the transition to becoming vertical schools.

Senior Infants to 6th Class

Pupils are enrolled during the school year, (if newly resident in the Parish) provided accommodation is available, in accordance with the above criteria and the provisions of this common enrolment policy.

Pupils Transferring/Applying During School Year

Such applications will only be considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area. These applications are subject to the Common Applications and Enrolment Policy, available space, and the provision of information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress.

Pupils transferring from a school to another school will be kept on roll until written confirmation is received from the new school. Reports etc. will be forwarded following this notification. Pupils must be registered and attending for a minimum of one month before letters of confirmation are given out, as required.

Boards of Management: Exceptional Cases

The Boards of Management participating in the Common Enrolment System reserve the right to refuse enrolment or, to rescind an offer of enrolment to any child, in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

1. The child has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education, or
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

The Boards of Management in the Common Enrolment System also reserve the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind Department of Education and Skills Guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and also the following:

- a. Size of/available space in classrooms.
- b. Educational needs of a particular age range of a class.
- c. Multi-grade classes.
- d. Presence of pupils with special educational/behavioural needs.
- e. D.E.S. maximum class average directives.

Enrolment of Children with Special Needs

Children with special educational needs are welcome to make an application to enrol and every effort will be made to provide them with an appropriate education as well as to include them in every aspect of school life.

On enrolment of children with special needs the Board of Management may request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available, will request that the child be assessed as soon as possible. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required. Following receipt of the report, the Board of Management may assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report.

Where the Board of Management deems that further resources are required, it will request the Special Education Needs Organiser (*NCSE see Circular 01/05*) to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, resource teacher for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other.

The school shall meet with the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. It may be necessary for the Board of Management to decide to defer enrolment of a particular child pending -

- (a) receipt of an assessment report and/or
- (b) the provision of appropriate resources by the DES to meet the needs specified by the medical and or psychological report.

Notwithstanding the availability of such resources, parents of children who are unsatisfied with the level of educational provision in the school shall be advised to consider a special school, which is designed and resourced to specifically cater for the needs of children with special educational needs.

Appeals

The Board of Management will notify parents of their decision with regard to their application within 21 days of the closing date for the receipt of applications. They will inform the parents/guardians in writing of that decision.

Parents/guardians will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management.

Please note that the address at which the applicant resides will be the address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment.

If the Board of Management refuses to enrol a student in the school, the parent/guardian of the student may appeal the decision at local level. The appeal must be submitted within 10 days of the date of the refusal to enrol. It must be made in writing, addressed to the Board of Management, and clearly state the grounds for the appeal. The Board of Management will respond within 10 days of the receipt of such an appeal.

If following the conclusion of the appeal procedures at school level, a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the decision made that parent/guardian has a statutory entitlement under section 29 of the Education Act to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. It should be noted that such an appeal must be lodged within 42 days of the school's refusal to enrol.

Details on appealing decisions on enrolment under section 29 of the Education Act, are available on the Department of Education and Skills website at www.education.ie

SECTION 3

Policy Evaluation, Monitoring, Review and Ratification

This policy was developed in consultation with parents, staff and Boards of Management of the schools.

Policy Evaluation

The Boards of Management and the Common Enrolment Committee will evaluate and review the implementation of all aspects of this Common Applications and Enrolment Policy every year, to amend the Policy as required.

Policy Availability

Parents may obtain a copy of this Common Applications and Enrolment Policy from the school website or directly from the school.

Policy Ratification

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's CBS Primary on June 28th, 2017.

Signed: Pauline Plunkett
Chairperson of the Board of Management

The contents of this policy have been approved by The Armagh Diocesan Education Office, acting on behalf of the Patron.

Appendices

- Appendix 1** Common Applications and Enrolment Form

- Appendix 2** Common Applications and Enrolment Form – Notes

- Appendix 3** Common Applications and Enrolment Form – Timeline

- Appendix 4** Common Applications and Enrolment System

Appendix 1

Common Applications and Enrolment Form

School Stamp

**St. Peter's Parish Primary Schools
Drogheda
Common Application Form 2018/19**

School Use Only

Surname: _____ **First Name:** _____
Date of Birth: _____ **Gender:** _____
P.P.S. Number: _____ **Religion:** _____
Nationality: _____ **Parish in which you live:** _____

Address: all correspondence will issue to this address

Previous School/Preschool: _____

Father / Guardian Details

Mother / Guardian Details

Surname _____	Surname _____
First Name _____	First Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
Telephone _____ Home _____ Work _____ Mobile _____	Telephone _____ Home _____ Work _____ Mobile _____
Email _____	Email _____

Please state the name of any brothers or sisters **currently** attending any of the primary schools listed overleaf.

Name _____ **School** _____
Name _____ **School** _____
Name _____ **School** _____

Please provide any other information, which you feel, may be relevant to this application.

Any Other Information

DECLARATION

By submitting this application I/We hereby agree that the applicant student will take part fully in every aspect of the school curriculum and will follow the Code of Behaviour/Anti Bullying Policy of the School. I/We have read and accept the Admission and Enrolment Policies of the relevant schools. Completion of this application and enrolment form does not constitute or guarantee an offer of a place in any of the four schools.

Father's/Guardian's Signature

Mother's/Guardian's Signature

Date: _____

Date: _____

*It is MOST IMPORTANT for parents to indicate on this form **3** schools to which they are applying in descending order of choice. Only those schools identified in order of choice will be empowered to consider your application. If your child is unsuccessful in obtaining the first choice, this will not prejudice his/her chances of obtaining a place in one of the lower choices. **By submitting this form a parent acknowledges that failure to identify three choices may result in your child not being offered any school place should the schools applied to be over-subscribed or should your child not meet the criteria in the admissions policies of those schools identified. Forms will be returned if three choices are not filled in. Schools will share the information for your preferences with other schools if relevant.***

Please return the completed Application Form to the Principal at the Number 1 school of your choice by 12.30pm on Monday, 18th January 2017. Please enclose an A4 sized stamped self-addressed envelope.

Please fill in your 1 to 3 choices

St. Brigid's & St. Patrick's (<i>co-ed</i>), Bóthar Brugha, Drogheda	
St. Joseph's CBS (<i>boys</i>), Sunday Gate, Drogheda	
St. Oliver's (<i>co-ed</i>), Ballymakenny Rd, Drogheda	
Presentation (<i>girls</i>), Ballymakenny Rd, Drogheda	

Late Applications: Parents/Guardians of applications received after the closing date will be notified in due course after all other applications have been processed

Appendix 2

Common Application and Enrolment Notes

What is St. Peter's Parish Primary Schools Common Application System?

The St. Peter's Parish Primary Schools Common Application System is the process by which the application for enrolment to the participating primary schools is managed.

Which primary schools participate in the system?

The four primary schools participating in the 2018/19 system are as follows:

St. Brigid's & St. Patrick's Schools
Presentation Primary School
St. Joseph's National School
St. Oliver's National School

How do I make an application for enrolment to a participating primary school?

In order to make an application for the academic year 2018 you must complete the common application form which will be available from all participating primary schools.

When completing the form it is important that you indicate a minimum of three schools to which you are applying in genuine, descending order of choice as failure to do so may result in your child not being offered a school place. Copies of this policy may be accessed by contacting the school or by referring to the school website.

All information provided by you must be to the best of your knowledge, accurate and truthful. It should be noted, that application forms found to have inaccurate or misleading information will be withdrawn from the system and any offer made by a participating primary school, based on the information provided, will be deemed invalid.

The completed application form accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope, should be sent to the Principal at the school of your first choice, but in any event, forms must be submitted no later than 12 noon, Friday, February 9th, 2018. **Only one form per child will be permitted by the system.**

What can I do if I have submitted an application form but wish to change the order of my preferences?

Changes to order of preferences are allowed providing that they are made prior to the closing date for submission of application forms.

- If the school of first preference **remains unchanged** you should write to the Principal of that school, enclosing the second application form, and informing him/her that you have amended your choices and now wish to proceed with the new/revised application form.
- If the school of first preference **has changed** you should write to the Principal of the school of your original first choice informing him/her that you are withdrawing your application. The new/revised form should then be submitted to the school of first choice.

In the event that we are unable to contact you the application from the earliest submission date will remain on the system. **If all forms submitted by you are dated on the same day they will be removed from the system until the end of the process at which time they will be presented for consideration to all schools listed on your form with available capacity.**

What happens if an application form is submitted after the closing date/time for receipt of application?

The closing date/time for the receipt of applications, 12 noon, Friday, February 9th, 2018 will be strictly enforced. Please apply on time. Submitting a late application normally means that the application will not be processed until after offers have been made to on-time applicants. This could mean that your child will not get a place in the school you want.

St. Peter's Parish Primary Schools Common Application System 2018 – Key Dates

See Appendix 3

Appendix 3

Common Applications and Enrolment Timeline

Timeline for Common Application and Enrolment System 2018

December 4th/January 2018	Parents invited to apply to enrol through Common Applications and Enrolment System
Friday, 9th February 2018	Closing date for applications to enrol. Applications to be in by 12 noon at school of first choice.
Friday, March 2 nd 2018	Last date for Parents/Guardians to be informed in writing about success of application by March 2 nd 2018 Registration forms sent to all successful applicants.
Friday March 9 th 2018	Final date for parents to accept offer and to register pupil. Acceptance to be in by 12 noon.
Wednesday March 14 th 2018	Final Date for receipt of appeals. Appeals to be in by 12 noon
Wednesday March 14 th 2018	Meeting of CAES committee regarding appeals at 2 pm
Wednesday March 21 st 2018	Last date for decisions re appeals sent out

Note:

Offers of places will be received by parents from Scoil Aonghusa on or before Tuesday 6th February 2018 to enable unsuccessful applicants to apply on time for the Common Enrolment System.

Appendix 4

Common Applications and Enrolment System

Introduction

In December 2013 the five Catholic primary schools in St. Peter's Parish began a consultative process exploring how the future needs of Primary Education in the parish could best be met. With permission from our Patron and the Department of Education, parents, teachers, pupils and members of our school Boards engaged in a wide ranging and consultative process over the following months.

Two major findings emerged from this extensive research:

1. Almost all parents would prefer their children to attend one primary school and not move school at the end of second class as currently is the case.
2. Some parents would prefer their children to attend a coeducational school model while other wanted to retain the single sex model as currently is the case.

In order to facilitate these preferences, the four primary schools in the present system, St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's CBS and St. Brigid's and Presentation Girls agreed to work together to provide a solution.

The following decision was taken by the four Boards of Management in response to these wishes:

1. All four schools to form vertical (junior infants to sixth class) schools.
2. St. Patrick's & St. Brigid's to amalgamate and form a co-educational school.
3. St. Joseph's to remain single-sex boys' only school.
4. Presentation Girls to remain single-sex girls' only school.

In order to ensure the continued viability and development of all schools it was agreed:

- To establish and develop a **Common Application and Enrolment System** for the new schools.
- To include St. Oliver's NS, Ballymakenny Rd in this new **Common Application and Enrolment System**.
- That the **Common Application and Enrolment System** will be administered by an **Enrolment Committee** set up by the Boards of Management of the participating schools.

Secondary Schools

This reconfiguration of the primary school system in St. Peter's Parish will not interfere with parents' ability to choose a secondary school of their choice.

Scoil Aonghusa and St. Ita's Special schools

These schools are also part of Catholic educational provision in St. Peter's parish. It was agreed that these schools would not form part of the **Common Application and**

Enrolment System and would continue to enrol pupils as they have done heretofore, as their catchment area extends beyond St. Peter's parish boundaries.

St. Peter's Parish North Drogheda Forum

To enable full co-operation and communication between all the Catholic schools serving St. Peter's Parish in North Drogheda a FORUM, enabling representatives from all seven schools to meet regularly, was established. This Forum will also be attended by representatives of St. Peter's Parish Pastoral Council. This will enable input by the wider Catholic community.

Procedures Governing the Common Applications and Enrolment System

The **Common Applications and Enrolment System** will be administered in accordance with the **Common Applications and Enrolment Policy** which will be common to all four schools.

The details of the new application system will be communicated to all parents whose children are attending the schools when the new system is initiated and to all parents in St. Peter's parish. Implications of the new system for parents will be explained in a series of meeting for parents, to be arranged.

The new **Application Form, Explanatory Notes**, and the **Timeline** for all steps in the application and enrolment process will be also made available along with the new **Common Applications and Enrolment Policy** which will guide the whole process of applying to primary schools in the parish. See **Appendix 1** for Application Form and **Appendix 2** for Application notes. **Appendix 3** outlines the relevant dates and times.