



Scoil Aine

Roll number: 19567K

Policy on Admission, Participation And Discharge of Students

Title

Admissions, Participation and Discharge Policy

Rationale

This policy, formulated by the Board of Management of Scoil Aine in consultation with the patron, the staff of the school and the parents of current students, is our new Admissions, Participation and Discharge Policy. It was drafted in March 2020 in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act, 2018. The BOM of Scoil Aine is publishing this as the official Admission, Participation and Discharge Policy for the school which will clearly and unambiguously define the criteria for student admission, participation and eventual discharge from Scoil Aine. This policy has been approved by its patron body, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora

Introductory Statement

Scoil Aine, formerly St. Anne's School was set up by the Department of Education in 1979 to cater for the educational needs of children and adolescents presenting with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties who had been referred to the then Child Guidance Service.

The school currently works with children and adolescents (primary and post primary levels) where there are significant concerns around psychological, social, emotional or behavioural challenges at levels that seriously impact the students' ability to progress their learning. The support of individual pupils attending the school is informed by the advice of the Galway City and County Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Teams (CAMHS teams) and local DES educational support services. The school is under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills and it is managed by its Board of Management. The membership of this Board is in accordance with the rules of the Department of Education and Skills.

General Information

This enrolment policy is being set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998). The chairperson of the Board of Management, Mr. Patrick Monaghan and the principal teacher, Ms. Geraldine Donnelly, Scoil Aine, Merlin Park, Galway, will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy and to assist parents in relation to enrolment matters.

School Name: Scoil Aine

School Address: Merlin Park, Galway.

Telephone No.: (091) 758766

Denominational Character: Catholic

Name of Patron Body : Catholic Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora

Total Number of DES Staff in the School: 4 Teachers, 4 Special Needs Assistants.

Other Staff attached to the School: Three CAMHS Social Care Staff

Student Profile:

All of the children and adolescents admitted to Scoil Aine present with significant difficulties (psychological, social, emotional, behavioural and educational) and during their placement in the school these difficulties are addressed by CAMHS services in the context of their families, their homes and their school environments.

Range of Classes Taught:

The school has four classes, each with a maximum pupil-teacher ratio of six to one.

- Two primary classes
- Two post primary classes

The school is funded by the DES and operates within all DES rules and regulations and the relevant legislation, Education Act (1988), Education Welfare Act (2000), EPSEN Act (2004) Rules for National Schools (1965) and the more recent Education (Admission to Schools) Act, 2018.

The school follows DES curricular and other programmes, which may be changed from time to time subject to the directions of the Minister for Education. The aim of the school is to replicate, in as far as possible, appropriately differentiated primary and post primary curricula. The full curriculum is available at primary level. A core range of subjects is offered at second level, with additional subjects contingent on student needs and the limit of teaching resource.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Scoil Aine is a co-educational special school, operating on a placement basis, As a diocesan school it is committed to the development of the whole person, the handing on of Christian values and a shared diverse Irish culture to the next generation. It strives to be a leader in integration and in the promotion of respect for diversity. Respect for all religions and for people of no faith is an important part of the life of this school.

The school provides individualised educational intervention for students ranging from Junior Primary through to Senior Post Primary, Leaving Certificate Level. Scoil Aine strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, emotional, moral and cultural needs of all the pupils are identified and addressed.

In line with DES policy on integration, Scoil Aine aims to bring all pupils to a state of emotional and academic readiness that will enable them to return to their previous educational settings or move on to new educational settings as soon as is considered appropriate. This decision is made by the school staff in consultation with the members of the multidisciplinary CAMHS teams, with the parents and the students' own schools. .

Admission /Participation/ Discharge Procedures

Admission

- **Admissions Application Procedure**

Application for a place at Scoil Aine is made by parents/guardians to the Board of Management of the school .

Scoil Aine will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, ‘civil status ground’, ‘disability ground’, ‘discriminate’, ‘family status ground’, ‘gender ground’, ‘ground of race’, ‘religion ground’, ‘sexual orientation ground’ and ‘Traveller community ground’ shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Scoil Aine is a special school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

The Board of Management requires the following documentation to be submitted by parents for consideration by the *Admissions Committee for a place in Scoil Aine.

- Completed Scoil Aine admission application form
- NCSE Special School Pupil Application
- NCSE Transport Application form
- A referral letter from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) team that the student is attending
- Supporting documentation from CAMHS team identifying that the child or adolescent has significant social, emotional, and or behavioural (SEBD) / mental health needs that a clinical plan is in place to address these needs and that this clinical plan will continue to be implemented (regular school /team meetings) for the duration of the child’s attendance at Scoil Aine.

This admission application form is available from the principal of Scoil Aine.

Submission of an admission application does not guarantee a place in Scoil Aine but all complete applications will be considered by the *Admissions Committee, comprising the principal, teacher representative, special needs assistant representative and social care representative.

- **Selection Criteria**

All applications for admission which have the required documentation will be scrutinised by the Admissions Committee, chaired by the principal of the school. The committee will make recommendations for admission to the Board of Management of the school.

The BOM will make the final decision on admissions to the school, based on the advice of the Admissions Committee. In addition to the educational, clinical and welfare needs of each applicant pupil the following factors will also be considered:

- The safety, health and welfare of all students and school staff
- The maintenance of a school environment supportive of learning
- The protection of the educational interests of the other students in the school
- The effective operation and management of the school
- The availability of school places

The school will admit all proposed applicants where the school has places available. In the event that the school is oversubscribed at any stage during the year, there will be a waiting list for placements in operation.

The school is required by law to have regard for the efficient use of resources, and will have regard to these considerations in managing the admission of students and afterwards in operating the school. The school is also fully aware of its obligations to provide for maximum accessibility of students to the school and to promote the rights of parents to send their children to the school of their choice.

While bearing all of these criteria in mind, the school also has a legal duty to the patron to uphold the characteristic spirit of the school which is stated elsewhere in this document. The admission of students is bound by the admissions application system and limited by the constraints of class size.

The school will prohibit interviews, consideration of a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude, consideration of a parent's occupation, apart from in the case of stated exceptions, as a consideration for the offer of a place.

The board of Scoil Aine 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.

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.

- **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.

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.

Participation

All children and adolescents who are admitted to Scoil Aine are accepted for a defined period of time, after which their admission is reviewed.

- **Outpatient students – Primary / Post Primary**

Once admitted, the student is assessed educationally through formal testing and informal observation along with feedback from mainstream schools, parents and members of the relevant CAMHS outpatient team. If it is decided that the student continues a placement after the initial four week assessment period then an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is formulated by the school in conjunction with the relevant multidisciplinary professionals and the parents. This plan is implemented and reviewed regularly.

- **Inpatient students – Primary / Post Primary**

Once enrolled, the student is assessed educationally through formal testing and informal observation along with feedback from mainstream schools, parents and the CAMHS inpatient team. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is formulated at the multidisciplinary team proposal meeting, and it forms part of the Individual Care Management Plan (ICMP of the patient). This IEP is drawn up by the school in conjunction with the relevant multidisciplinary professionals and the parents. This plan is implemented and reviewed/alterd weekly at the team review meeting.

It is the aim of Scoil Aine to enable all students enrolled to participate as fully as possible in all school programmes, both curricular and extra-curricular.

The Board will provide details of the school's arrangements in respect of students, where the parent, or the student if he/she is 18 years or over, has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction

- **Additional Educational Needs**

Scoil Aine with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with Severe Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) who are in the average range of intellectual functioning .

Scoil Aine provides an education exclusively for students with significant social, emotional and /or behavioural challenges (SEBD) and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of additional educational needs provided for by this school.

It is the policy of the school to identify, on admission, the specific additional educational needs of each student. All applications must be accompanied by supporting documentation from CAMHS services confirming the mental health status and the social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs of the enrolled child or adolescent. The school will have access to all relevant reports and assessments on the child as provided to the service by parents/ guardians and professionals involved with the child. This information is required to:

- ensure that the most appropriate education can be planned and provided for the students' additional educational needs whilst at Scoil Aine
- access the appropriate supports and resources from the DES, NCSE and other support agencies in order to prepare pupils for their successful integration or reintegration to their long term schooling

The school will, in so far as resources permit, provide special treatment and facilities to enable all students to participate as fully as possible in all the activities of the school. (Section 4 and 7 of the Equal Status Act of 2000)

- **Suspension and Expulsion**

The Board of Management is required by law to maintain reasonable order and safety throughout the school and for all school activities. It discharges this duty through its employees - the Principal, Teachers and Special Needs Assistants - to enable effective teaching and learning to take place.

The maintenance of safety and good order requires the drafting and implementation of a code of behaviour in which it is a requirement to set out the means by which the school staff will deal with behaviour that is considered unacceptable. These procedures are to be found in the School's Code of Behaviour.

Expulsion and suspension are the two ultimate sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. Expulsion will only be considered as a very last resort. Suspension will be implemented either after all of the minor sanctions have been exhausted, or as a response to a single breach of school discipline so serious that any lesser sanction would be inappropriate in the circumstances. Suspensions may be from attendance at school for one day, or may be more limited in their scope and effect.

The Board alone has the authority to expel a student. The principal is empowered by the Board to impose a suspension, and is required to inform the Board whenever this is done. The procedures for managing suspensions and all details of appeals in these situations are set out in the school's Code of Behaviour.

Discharge

When the service provided by Scoil Aine is no longer thought to be of benefit to individual students, they will be facilitated in moving back to/on to long term educational settings. Students are discharged from Scoil Aine when they are considered to be able to benefit educationally, emotionally, and psychologically in a mainstream setting. This decision is arrived at by school staff, in consultation with the CAMHS multidisciplinary teams and parents, and specific arrangements are then made for the transition of the students back to their schools or on to new schools. School reports are compiled by Scoil Aine and are forwarded to the parents, and then, with parental permission, on to the relevant CAMHS multidisciplinary team and the students' base or new schools.

<h2>Success Criteria</h2>

The success of the policy will be exemplified in the following ways:

- Practices and procedures listed in this policy are being consistently implemented by the school
- Admission and discharge of pupils from Scoil Aine happens in a structured and considered way for the student, the parents and the mainstream school.
- Positive feedback from pupils and parents, school staff, staff of mainstream schools, the DES, the NCSE, NEPS, TESS and the multidisciplinary teams (Community and Inpatient) of the CAMHS Galway service.

Roles and Responsibility

The teaching staff is responsible for updating the admission application documentation – admission application form, annual admission notice , school information pack for students and parents/guardians. .

The principal is responsible for providing admission application documentation and for accepting all required application documentation from parents/guardians.

The Admissions Committee, comprising the principal, teacher representative, special needs assistant representative and social care representative, is responsible for considering applications for admission and making admission recommendations to the Board.

The Board of Management is responsible for decisions on admission applications and for reviewing admission criteria.

The Board will consult with and inform parents where changes are being made to the admissions policy and/ or annual admissions statement

Implementation Date and Timetable for Review

This policy was updated in 2020 in line with the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and is currently being implemented

The admissions policy and annual admissions notice will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Ratification & Communication

This policy and statement have been prepared and adopted by the Board. It will be made available to the public on the school website and on request at the school during school hours.

Ratified by Board of Management on -----

Signed -----

Chairperson, Board of Management.

