

Admission Policy of The Abbey School

School Address: Station Road, Tipperary Town, Co. Tipperary

Roll number: 65490L

School Patron/s: Edmund Rice Schools Trust ERST

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 approved by the school patron on 10th September 2020. 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 The Abbey 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

The Abbey School is a Catholic all boys voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust ERST.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith, and which school provides religious education 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 The Abbey 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.

Mission Statement

The Abbey School, in the tradition of Edmund Rice, cares for all its students. We strive to help each reach his full potential academically, socially, in sport and in extra –curricular activities. By our own example we lead our students to put Christian values into practice in their dealings with others. We encourage them to be concerned and participative citizens in their local community, nationally and in Europe and to be aware of their responsibilities to the poor and marginalised of the Third World.

That the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolments
- Respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society.

How the values espoused in the ERST Charter are lived out in the Abbey School:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values means that in the Abbey School we live our Catholic Faith, experience God, respect the beliefs and values of each member of the school community
- Promoting partnership means that in the Abbey School we make everyone feel welcome, build a Christian community with a shared vision and mission, recognise the voice of staff, students and parents
- Excellence in teaching and learning means that in the Abbey School we have high expectations of our teachers and students, nurture the development of all aspects of our lives, respond to a changing world, use technology responsibly and creatively to enhance our learning and promote learning as a life-long enterprise
- Creating a caring school community means that in the Abbey School we show care and compassion as modelled by Blessed Edmund Rice, respect and celebrate the dignity of each person, seek to help those who are disadvantaged or in need in society and speak up for those whose voice is not heard
- Inspiring transformational leadership means that in The Abbey School we motivate people to work towards the vision of Blessed Edmund, inspire the minds and hearts of our students to have courage and confidence to stand up for what we believe in, lead by giving good example and take responsibility for our actions.

3. Admission Statement

The Abbey 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.

The Abbey School is an all-boys school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a girl applying for admission to this school

The Abbey School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of the Catholic faith in preference to others.

The Abbey 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 of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

The Abbey School does not have Special classes.

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

The Abbey School provides education exclusively for boys and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

The Abbey 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:

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school.

Subject to the above, the selection criteria are as follows:

Sixth Class boys in the following categories will, on application, receive a place, except in very exceptional circumstances:

Brothers of present students

Brothers and sons of former students up to a maximum of 25% of the total places available according to the annual admission notice in the case of sons of former students.

Applicants with an affiliation to the Edmund Rice ethos. Example, a boy transferring from another second-level Edmund Rice School due to his family re-locating to the Tipperary area.

Remaining places will be allocated by lottery. If a lottery is necessary, it will be held in public in the school; relevant parents and students will be given a minimum of one weeks' notice in writing and the lottery will be supervised by a member of An Garda Síochána.

The lottery will be conducted as follows:

- The lottery will be supervised by the following – A member of the Garda Síochána, the Principal and the Chairperson of the Parents Council.
- Twins or triplets will be treated as separate applicants and allocation of a place to one does not guarantee allocation of a place to another.
- Names will be drawn until all places are filled.
- When all places are filled, names of applicants will continue to be drawn to establish the order of the waiting list.
- If a vacancy arises it will be offered to the applicant highest on the waiting list.

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:

A draw will be held in the school as per the lottery system above.

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;
- d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- e) a requirement that a student, or his 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 (2) parents of a student having attended the school. In relation to (2) parents having attended, a school may only apply this criterion 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,

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to The Abbey School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- 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 The Abbey School, you must indicate—

(i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) 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.

Applicants should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.

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 The Abbey School 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.
- (iii) 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
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school.

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 data between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

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 The Abbey 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 The Abbey 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.

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 not later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list.

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:

- Applicants shall apply in writing to the Board of Management indicating their wish to apply for a place in a stated year.

Applicants shall apply in writing to the Board of Management indicating their wish to apply for a place in a stated year.

Applicants should provide the following information:

- Details of their current School
- A full list of subjects currently being studied
- Copies of at least three school reports from the last two years
- Provide details of any Special Educational needs that may need to be catered for
- Include a written reference from the Principal of the students' current school

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school.

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

The board of The Abbey School or any persons acting on its behalf shall not, except in accordance with section 64 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, 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 parents of students and students (over 18) who 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.

Parents of students and students (over 18) who wish to opt out of RE class should make a written request to the principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent or the student, as the case may be, to discuss their options. Throughout this process the constitutional right of the parent/ student (over 18 years) will be respected by the school.

The 1998 Education Act states that schools are required to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students (Section 9 (d)). At the Abbey School the allocated time on the timetable for Religious Education responds to this. Students who opt out of RE class are required to use this time to study material relating to their own religious tradition or belief, for example sacred texts. Students of no religious faith, who opt out of RE class, are required to study relevant literature or philosophical texts. A list of suggested texts can be provided by the school. In line with the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter, The Abbey School places great importance on the religious or spiritual formation of all its students. Each student has his own personal journey which will be encouraged and respected. Students who opt out of RE class will not be offered extra tuition or study periods.

18. Reviews/appeals

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 and must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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. This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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. This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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) This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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) This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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.