



Sliabh a' Mhadra National School Admissions Policy



Admission Policy of Sliabh a' Mhadra National School

School Address: Ballyduff, Tralee, Co. Kerry

School Website: www.sliabhamhadra.ie

Roll number: 03132I

School Patron: Diocese of Kerry

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 26th November 2024. 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 Sliabh a' Mhadra'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.

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

Sliabh a' Mhadra National School is a Catholic mixed primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Kerry.

“Catholic Ethos” in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, a living relationship with God and with other people
- including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
- the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith
- and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos

and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Sliabh a' Mhadra National School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

This policy is linked to other relevant policies within the school and in particular our Code of Behaviour.

Mission Statement

The mission of Sliabh a'Mhadra N.S., in partnership with teachers and Parents/Guardians, is to educate our pupils to their fullest potential, in an environment where they are happy and safe, where they respect themselves and others and where each child feels equal.

Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. is a Catholic School under the patronage of the Bishop of Kerry and aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people.

The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic school provides Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

The school works in cooperation with the local priest and parish in all matters and will together with parents engage in the preparation of the pupils for the sacraments.

Our School Ethos

Sliabh a'Mhadra N.S. is a co-educational primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupil are identified and addressed.

Sliabh' Mhadra N.S. aims to provide a well balanced educational programme so that all students can develop skills and attitudes that will allow them to grow into mature, responsible, well rounded individuals capable of living fulfilling lives and of making a worthwhile contribution to society.

Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes.

Sliabh a'Mhadra N.S. will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in the Parents Association.

Sliabh a'Mhadra N.S. will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupil's respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. will provide gender equality amongst the teachers and pupils.

While Sliabh a'Mhadra N.S. is a school with a catholic ethos, it also welcomes pupils of other faiths and no faith.

Tá an-suim agus grá againn don ghaeilge. Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a úsáid agus a labhairt go nadúrtha sa scoil.

3. Admission Statement

Sliabh a' Mhadra National School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- the gender of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the civil status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the family status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the sexual orientation of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the religion of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the disability of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- if the student or the applicant in respect of the student is part of the Traveller community , or
- if 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.

Sliabh a' Mhadra Primary School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

- Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.
- Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

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

Sliabh a' Mhadra National School, with the approval of the Minister of Education, has established a junior class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

This class is for children who have a Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)
AND
- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports
AND
- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same.
AND
- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism

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

Sliabh a' Mhadra National School is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special class attached to Sliabh a' Mhadra National School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specific category of Special Educational Needs provided for in this class.

The Enrolment Application for the ASD Class must be accompanied by the following supporting documentation:

A Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)
AND
- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports
AND
- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same.
AND
- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism

There will be a maximum of six places available in this class.

Transfers

Pupils may transfer to the ASD class during the school year subject to availability of places. Pupils transferring must enter the same class level that they are leaving, and have

the necessary diagnosis and recommendations as outlined above. The school may request other relevant documentation if a pupil is transferring from another school. All documents need to be received in order for the application to be deemed fully completed.

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:

1. Current students who meet the criteria.
2. Siblings of children already enrolled in the school (including step siblings and foster siblings), priority eldest;
3. Children of past pupils , priority eldest;
4. Children residing in the parish, priority eldest;
5. Random selection, independently verified.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

Priority to the eldest in accordance with the above criteria or in the case of criteria 5, random selection, a lottery will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner by the Principal, a member of the Board of Management, and an officer of the Parent Association.

If oversubscribed, places will be allocated in the Autism class in accordance with the following criteria and in the following order:

1. Pupils currently enrolled in our mainstream school and seeking to transfer to the Autism class.
2. Applicants with siblings currently enrolled in the school, priority eldest.
3. Children of past pupils, priority eldest
4. Children residing in the parish, priority eldest.
5. Children currently enrolled in another local mainstream school, priority eldest., where Sliabh a' Mhadra is their nearest ASD Class with space.

If spaces are still available, places will be allocated randomly, once an assessment has been made by the Principal.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

Priority to the eldest in accordance with the above criteria or in the case of criteria 4, random selection, a lottery will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner by the Principal, a member of the Board of Management, and an officer of the Parent Association.

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 naíonrai,
- 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 or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission
- f. a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school other than in the case of this school including the selection criteria based on (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 criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

- g. the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

8. **Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Sliabh a' Mhadra National 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 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 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 Sliabh a' Mhadra National 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.

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 Sliabh a' Mhadra 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.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

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

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (iv) a student’s personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Sliabh a’ Mhadra National School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of Sliabh a’ Mhadra National School in the order of priority assigned to the students’ applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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

14. Late Applications

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

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

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

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

Such applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis but will normally only be considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area.

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

Applications for enrolment during the school year will be considered subject to school policy, available space and the provision of information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress.

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 Sliabh a' Mhadra National School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of Sliabh a' Mhadra National School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

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

The board of Sliabh a' Mhadra National School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

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

Prior to religious occasions parents/guardians will be contacted to ascertain if they wish their child to attend the religious events.

Alternative classes will be offered for these pupils by a teacher.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parents/guardians of the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under

section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

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

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

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

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parents/guardians of 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.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. on 15/09/2025.

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