

## **Admission Policy of Four Masters National School**

**School Address: Kinlough, Co Leitrim**

**Roll number: 20079E**

**School Patron: Bishop of Kilmore**

### **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 in 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 Four Masters National 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.

The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore and the Chairperson of the Board of Management is Mrs. Finola Furey. The school's Principal is Mrs. Siobhan Clarke.

### **2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

The Four Masters National School and it is a Catholic, co-educational primary school. It was established in 1847, though it has only been in the present building since 1985. The school is governed by a Board of Management consisting of eight members which has representatives of parents, teachers, the patron and the local community. The following are the contact details for the school: Telephone: 071 9841123, email address [secretary@fourmastersns.ie](mailto:secretary@fourmastersns.ie) and school website: [www.fourmastersns.com](http://www.fourmastersns.com)

### **Our Mission Statement**

*Ní neart go cur le chéile.*

There is no strength without unity.

*Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí.*

Praise youth and she will flourish.

### **Our Vision Statement**

Our vision is that management teachers, parents and children would work together to facilitate a positive, safe and welcoming learning environment where children can receive a comprehensive education. Mutual valuing and respect will be encouraged, as will respect for the environment. Each individual pupil and staff member will be helped reach his/her full potential.

### **Additional information on the school:**

The school has a Catholic ethos, but welcomes pupils from all (or no) religious background. At present there are fifteen whole-time teachers on the staff. There are eleven mainstream class teachers, four full time SEN teachers and an administrative principal. The school has a full-time secretary and a part-time caretaker and part-time cleaner. There are four Special Needs Assistants in the school also.

The full range of classes, Junior Infants – 6<sup>th</sup>, are catered for. The school caters for all aspects of the Primary Curriculum as prescribed by D.E.S., which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Education Act (1998).

The curriculum includes language (i.e. Irish and English), Maths, Religious Education (Roman Catholic), Social Environmental and Scientific Education (i.e. History, Geography and Science) Arts Education (i.e. Visual Arts, Music and Drama). Physical Education and Social Personal and Health Education.

The school is funded largely by the D.E.S. which provides grants both for maintenance and the purchase of materials/resources for various subject areas. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department. School policy can only reflect the resources and funding available.

### **Schedule of a Catholic School**

A Roman Catholic school (which is established in connection with the Minister) 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.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Four Masters National 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.

Four Masters National 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 Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Four Masters National School, will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation 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 required to do so by the Council."

"Four Masters National School, will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998."

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

Four Masters National School is a mainstream school. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are catered for by their mainstream class teacher with the support of the Special Education Team. Four Masters National School also has a Special Class for children with Autism. The special classes attached to the Four Masters National School provide an education exclusively for students with Autism and the school may refuse admission to this

class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

## 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

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

## 6. Oversubscription

In general terms the Board will deem the school to be full based on the DES Staffing Schedule. However, the Board reserves the right to determine, on an annual basis, the number of classes in the school bearing in mind the available space to accommodate additional classrooms, existing and future pupil placement demands and demographics.

The BOM reserves the right on an annual basis to determine the maximum number of children in each separate class bearing in mind:

- a. Size of / available space in classroom
- b. Educational needs of children of a particular age
- c. Multi-grade classes
- d. Presence of children with special educational/ behavioural needs
- e. Department's maximum class average directives (currently a maximum average of 23 children but may change from time to time as directed by the Department of Education and Skills). The allocation of children to individual classes is a matter for the principal.

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. Proposed new entrants who already have siblings or had siblings in the school.
2. Children from within the Parish boundaries.
3. Children of staff members.
4. All other applicants provided there is space available.

5. 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. The Board shall make offers based on the age of the applicant, with the oldest applicant getting the first offer, the second oldest applicant getting the second offer and so on.

## **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 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 the school including a selection criteria based on siblings of a student attending or having attended the school.
- (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 Four Masters 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 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 Four Masters 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 Four Masters National 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.

## **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. 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 Four Masters 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 Four Masters 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.

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:**

Pupils may transfer to the school, in accordance with our school's admissions policy. However, enrolment of children will depend on the availability of places in the requested class. The decision to enrol is at the discretion of the BOM, which will be mindful of the following:

1. Size of and available space in classrooms.

2. Educational needs of children of a particular age already enrolled.
3. Multi-grade classes.
4. Department of Education and Skills class size recommendations.

This is subject to school policy and available space overall and in the relevant class. Parents/Guardians will meet with the school principal, complete an application to enrol and provide a Birth Certificate. When the application for enrolment is made the Principal shall ascertain from the parent/guardian whether the pupil was previously enrolled in another National School. In order to assess the needs of the child and in accordance with Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, Section 66, the principal will seek all reports relating to that child from the principal of the school where the child previously attended.

The child will progress to the appropriate class. In the event that the child has not attended a school in the State, the principal will assign them to an age appropriate class.

**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:**

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time subject to the school's admission policy. However, enrolment of children during the school year will depend on the availability of places in the requested class. The decision to enrol is at the discretion of the Board of Management.

The same procedures apply as above.

Parents/Guardians will meet with the school principal, complete an application to enrol and provide a Birth Certificate.

When the application for enrolment is made the Principal shall ascertain from the parent/guardian whether the pupil was previously enrolled in another National School. In order to assess the needs of the child and in accordance with Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, Section 66, the principal will seek all reports relating to that child from the principal of the school where the child previously attended.

The child will be placed in the appropriate class- repeating or skipping a class is not permissible. In the event that the child has not attended a school in the State, the principal will assign them to an age appropriate class.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Four Masters 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.

**Note:** Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.



## 17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The parents/guardians should inform the child's class teacher and/or Principal of their wishes in this regard in writing. A discussion will then take place with any parent/guardian of a child regarding attendance at school masses and instruction during Religious Education.

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### **Review of decisions by the board of Management**

The parent/guardian of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

### **Right of appeal**

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

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

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

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

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

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

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under

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