

Holywell Educate Together National School

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Admission Policy

Holywell Educate Together National School



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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 7th 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 Holywell ETNS'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 available on the school's website to complete and submit electronically.

The school releases **3 Admission Notices Annually:**

1. Junior Infants Mainstream Classes
2. Special Classes for Students with Autism
3. Non-Junior Infants Mainstream Classes (Senior Infants- 6th Class)

Prior to the commencement of Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 (Admission Policies and Admission of Students) Regulations 2020, Holywell ETNS accepted applications on a pre-enrolment list for school years up to and including 2023/2024. Such applications will be offered through sibling priority, then on 'first come first served' basis.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Holywell ETNS is under the Patronage of Educate Together and we are committed to the values laid down in Educate Together's Charter.

Educate Together schools are committed to the values laid down in Educate Together's Charter. Our schools are learner-centred, equality-based, co-educational and democratically-run. This means that all members of the school community, whatever their social, cultural or belief background, work together in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

Students follow an Ethical Education curriculum, learning about morality and spirituality; equality and justice; belief systems and an ethical approach to the environment. It teaches students about different

belief systems as well as atheism, agnosticism and humanism, without promoting any one worldview over another.

Our equality-based ethos informs all policies and practices in the daily life of the school. In exercising this policy making and decision-making responsibilities, the school's Board of Management upholds the characteristic spirit of the school.

Educate Together schools provide for equality of access in line with the Educate Together Charter and offers places to siblings enrolled in the school at the same time in the first instance.

The definition of a sibling in this policy includes step siblings and foster siblings who are enrolled in the school at the same time.

3. Admission Statement

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

- (a) the sex or 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.

Holywell ETNS is a mainstream primary school which has established special classes for children, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the special class at Holywell ETNS

Holywell ETNS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established three classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). As specified by the Minister, Holywell ETNS may refuse to admit to the classes a student who does not have the category of need specified.

There are three classes, each with a maximum of six places.

1. Assessment and classification of autism or autistic spectrum disorder by a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist using DSM-IV or V, or ICD-10 criteria OR multi-disciplinary assessment of same by a professional team (including a clinical psychologist, the assessment should be no older than 2 years).
2. An explicit recommendation of placement in a Special Class for Autism in a mainstream school must be provided by a recognised professional, with the recommendation not older than 2 years.
3. A fully completed online application form for admission for specifically the special class, has been submitted by the parents/guardians to the school.
4. The child must be **4 years old on September 1st** of the year of admission in respect of Junior Infant applications.
5. Places in the special classes for autism are only available for children until they have concluded eight years in primary school (or other equivalent), or if the student has reached their twelfth year of age. Students must then transfer to an appropriate second level setting.
6. Please refer to Section 7 for priority categories.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [Section 7 for Junior Infants](#), [Section 8 for Special Classes & Section 9 for Senior Infants – 6th Class](#) below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, as required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the Positive Behaviour Policy 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 [*Please refer to the school website www.holywelletns.ie for a copy of the Positive Behaviour Policy*]
- c) Where a student is less than 4 years of age on the 1st of September of the school year concerned.
- d) The special class attached to Holywell ETNS provides an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders 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.

6. 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.
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to: admission to a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned.
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents; (children of current school staff will be included here also).
- (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 siblings of students who are enrolled in the school at the same time,
- (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.

Offers of places will be made in the first instance based on existing waiting lists formed prior to February 2020, based on the priority category of the policy at the time of application (such pre-enrolment lists will cease to exist five years from the commencement of section 62 – the 31st January 2025 – as set out in the Act).

7. Oversubscription: Junior Infants

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 for Junior Infants.

Students must reach 4 years of age on or before 1st of June of the year the school year concerned.

Priority Category 1:

Applicant students who are siblings of children and enrolled in the school at the same time, and are 4 years of age on or before 1st of June of the year of admission into Junior Infants.

Priority Category 2:

Applicant students who are 4 years of age on or before 1st of June of the year of admission into Junior Infants.

Priority Category 3:

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), places will be offered or added to a waiting list by lottery.

8. Oversubscription: Special class

If a special class is oversubscribed the school will apply the following selection criteria to students. These will be applied in the order listed below to applications received within the timeline as set out in the school's annual admission notice for the special class.

The child must have a recommendation for the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class. Board approval to send email to parents to advise waiting list is replaced by annual admissions policy.

Priority Category 1:

Applicant students who are currently enrolled in Holywell ETNS mainstream, who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder which meets the ICD10 or DSMIV/V criteria, with recommendation for placement in an autism specific class and who have reached 4 years of age on or before the 1st of June of the year of admission into Junior Infants.

Priority Category 2:

Applicant students who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder which meets the ICD10 or DSMIV/V criteria, with recommendation for placement in an autism specific class and are siblings of children enrolled in the school at the same time and who have reached 4 years of age on or before the 1st of June of the year of admission into Junior Infants.

Priority Category 3:

Applicants who have diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder which meets the ICD10 or DSMIV/V criteria, recommendation for placement in an autism specific class who have reached 4 years of age on or before the 1st of June of the year of admission into Junior Infants.

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), places will be offered or added to a waiting list by lottery.

9. Oversubscription: Senior Infants to 6th Class

The annual admission process will be required to give a priority to siblings. If the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below. It will be applied to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice for other year groups. Students must be moving to the next year group if the application is for September or to the same year if applying to move during the school year:

Priority Category 1:

Applicant students who are siblings of children and enrolled in the school at the same time. 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), places will be offered or added to a waiting list by the earlier date of birth of the student.

Priority Category 2:

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), places will be offered or added to a waiting list by lottery.

10. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice for Junior Infants, a special class or to other year groups will be considered and decided upon in date order of when they were received 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 the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list.

If two late applications are received at the same time, places will be offered or added to a waiting list by the earlier date of birth of the student.

11. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available in Junior Infants, a special class or other year groups, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Holywell ETNS 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 Holywell ETNS 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 see [section 7](#) above. Late applications will be added to the list in date order, see [section 10 above](#).

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.

Waiting lists will expire at the end of each school year.

12. Admissions of students after the commencement of the school year

If a place is available after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, the place will be offered to the next place on the waiting list if there is one or to the next application.

13. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Holywell ETNS 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

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.

14. Notifying applicants of decisions

- a. School places are offered in writing only.

- b. Parents or Guardians must respond in writing to accept or decline the offer of a school place on or before the date and time specified in the Letter of Offer.
Failure to respond by the specified date will result in the place offered being forfeited.
- c. It is the sole responsibility of applicants to inform the school of any change of circumstances relevant to the admissions process by emailing secretary@holywelletns.ie , such as: contact details, email address, postal address, number of siblings, etc. It is imperative that parents/guardians submit the correct information for the child.

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the relevant annual admissions notice but no later than three weeks after the annual admissions process ends or for late applications, three weeks after the school receives an application.

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 or class concerned.

Applicants have the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see [section h](#) below for further details).

d. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Holywell ETNS, 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.

e. 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 Holywell ETNS 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 d](#) above.

f. 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 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)

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

The board of Holywell ETNS 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.

h. Reviews/Appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian 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 request must be made in writing to Chairperson of the Board of Management up to three weeks after the date the letter of refusal has been posted by the school.

The Board of Management will review the appeal at its next meeting from the date of receipt of the letter of appeal.

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.

The outcome of the review will be made known to the parent/guardian within three weeks of the Board meeting.

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/guardian 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.

i. Data Protection

The school acknowledges its obligations as a data controller under the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Information obtained for the purposes of allocating places in the school to students will only be used and disclosed in a manner which is compatible with this purpose. Only such personal data as are relevant and necessary for the performance of this function will be retained. The school undertakes to ensure that such information is processed fairly, that it is kept safe, secure, accurate, complete, and up to date. Individuals have the right to have any inaccurate information rectified or erased. All data submitted as part of the admissions process will be destroyed within twelve months of the end of the school year the application is for (as opposed to the receipt of the application). A copy of all personal data obtained and kept as part of the admissions process will be made available to the subject of such data on receipt of a written request to the chairperson of the board of management.