

SCHOOL ADDRESS: BEAUFORT, CO. KERRY

ROLL NUMBER: 19547E

SCHOOL PATRON: BISHOP RAY BROWNE

SCHOOL TRUSTEES: SAINT JOHN OF GOD SERVICES



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 20th October 2025. 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 St. Francis Special 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 hard copy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Francis Special School - which is situated in the grounds of St. Mary of The Angels in Beaufort, is a Catholic School under the Patronage of the Bishop of Kerry (Bishop Ray Browne) and the Trusteeship of St. John of God Services. While we have a Catholic ethos in St. Francis Special School, no Pupil is discriminated against because of religious beliefs. "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:

- (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 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
- (e) In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Francis Special 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.

St Francis Special School is dedicated to providing the highest quality, care and education of pupils under our instruction. In partnership with the Parents/Guardians, Families and/or Residential Personnel of our Pupils, we seek to promote individual intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development. The dignity of each child is maintained at a premium, thus ensuring equality

of provision. We believe that each child is entitled to an appropriate educational provision, regardless of individual levels of attainment and functioning. While enabling each pupil to develop

his/her potential to the full, we also want our pupils to be happy in school and to enjoy their time in our care.

St. Francis special School provides education to Pupils aged 4-18/19 assessed to have a moderate or a severe/profound learning disability. Applications are accepted from Pupils aged 4 -18/19 within the timeframe for receipt of applications as set out in the school's Annual Admissions Notice.

Educational Programmes

St. Francis Special School caters for the educational needs of its Pupils through an adapted Primary Curriculum and through a number of Junior and Senior Cycle Programmes - Levels 1 & 2.

3. Admission Statement

St. Francis Special 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.

- St. Francis Special School is a special school which with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs (Moderate or Severe/Profound Learning Disability) specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.
- St. Francis Special School 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.
- St. Francis Special School 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.
- St. Francis Special 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 Catholic 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/special class

St. Francis Special School - with the approval of the Minister for Education & Skills, provides an education for Pupils assessed to have a moderate or a severe/profound learning disability. Within this cognitive framework, many of our Pupils are also assessed to be on the autistic spectrum.

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

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for Moderate or Severe/Profound GLD when the following is provided in support of such an application: Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of special educational needs (e.g. 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 (insert category of special educational need e.g. autism)

St Francis Special School provides an education exclusively for students with Moderate or Severe/Profound GLD and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

St. Francis Special School is a Catholic and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic denomination, 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

1. Places will be allocated to existing pupils of St. Francis Special School, who, following further formal assessment, require placement in a different designation category and who continue to fulfil the enrolment criteria;
2. Places will be offered to siblings of existing pupils who fulfil the enrolment criteria.
3. Places will be offered to pupils based on the distance of the school from their primary residence, starting with the student whose primary residence is the shortest travelling distance from the school.
4. Places will be offered to children of staff members who fulfil the enrolment criteria.

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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including nafonraf,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
other than in relation to:
Admission to St. Francis Special School 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;
- (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;
- (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 St. Francis Special School will be based on the following:

- Our school's Admission Policy
- The school's Annual Admission Notice
- 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.

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 St. Francis Special 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 St. Francis Special 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 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 St. Francis Special 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 St. Francis Special 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.

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 offered a place if there is place available, and provided that they satisfy the criteria for acceptance. 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

St. Francis Special School accepts Applications from Parents/Guardians, of students of all age groups as outlined in the school's Admission Policy. All applications must be submitted within the timeframe for receipt of applications as set out in the school's Annual Admission Policy.

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

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

The board of St. Francis Special 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

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has 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:

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

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.

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** 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 School name on Date.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

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

This policy has been reviewed and updated in compliance with the Department of Education's Circular 39/2025, which provides specific guidance for special schools and special classes.