

Enrolment Policy

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1 SCHOOL PROFILE AND RESOURCES:

The Board of Management of the Galway Steiner National School's Policy on the Enrolment/Admission of children to its school is in line with the Education Act 1998. The Board of Management trusts that by so doing parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal Teacher will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the Policy.

Galway Steiner National School operates under the Rules for National Schools, The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), enacted sections of The Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004), all relevant equality legislation and Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circulars.

In this policy the term parent includes guardians, adoptive and Foster Parents and any adult deemed to be in loco parentis.

2 INTRODUCTION/RATIONALE

Galway Steiner National School is a school that is multi-denominational, co-educational, democratically run and child-centered, under the patronage of Lifeways Ireland.

It opened its doors in September 2015 starting with Junior Infants and growing by one class each year. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Science and depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the DES. The school follows the curriculum as prescribed by the DES.

Within the context and parameters of the DES regulations and programmes, the rights and responsibilities of the patron as set out in the Education Act and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other educational need;
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

The school day starts at 9:10 am and finishes at 1.50pm for the infant classroom and at 2:50pm from 1st class on.

3 ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

We welcome the enrolment of potential pupils to our school without distinction of gender, creed, ethnic origin, social or economic background, disability or other special educational need. We consider all applicants in order of application on a 'first come first served basis' as vacancies arise in taking into account the criteria listed below and depending on the needs of the child (see Enrolment of Special Needs children, below.)

4 DECISION MAKING

Decisions in relation to applications are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children, and are made by the Board of Management in accordance with the school policy.

The Board of Management of Galway Steiner National School, in its Enrolment Policy, respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. Consequently, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each class, bearing in mind:

- Health & Safety Concerns regarding Staff and Children
- Available classroom space
- Multi-grade classes
- Educational needs of the children
- Presence of children with special needs
- Department of Education & Science class size directives
- Appropriate Supports and Resources are available
- Time of school year
- Any other facts that the Board or its delegated authority consider relevant and appropriate

5 PROCEDURES – APPLICATION & ENROLMENT CRITERIA

Admission to the school is, of course, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources, and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission. Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources-where the resources cannot be secured, the school reserves the unfettered right to refuse admission.

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment in exceptional circumstances i.e. in the opinion of the Board of Management, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to the other pupils, school staff and/or school property. It is the responsibility of parents / guardians of any child to inform the school of any such needs on the enrolment application form for the child's own welfare. In this context the school authorities will have equal regard for the welfare of all the students and their right to an education in an atmosphere that is not detrimental to their physical, emotional, moral, social or intellectual development. Failure to fully complete the application form, failure to

supply any relevant information requested by the school or failure to make reasonable arrangements to meet with the school authorities to discuss the application may result in a child being refused admission to the school.

The BOM reserve the right to refuse enrolment of transfers from other schools in the case where a child has been suspended or expelled if it is deemed that he/she would pose an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and or school property. A written refusal will be issued.

5.1 APPLICATION ADMISSION

- Pre-enrolment forms are available from the school office (email info@galwaysteinerschool.com) or online at <https://galwaysteinerschool.com/enrol/>
- Provided there is space and the necessary facilities for the child (as in the case of children with special needs) and the criteria for decision making has been satisfied, the child's parents will then complete the Application Form.
- Failure to fully complete forms will result in refusal to admit the applicant
- The behaviour record of a student in their previous school/preschool shall be considered
- The attendance record of a student in their previous school/preschool shall be considered
- Accepted offers must be returned along with confirmation from the parents that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code of Behaviour by the child as well as a copy of all assessments relating to the child's development and/or needs if applicable.

The Application Form shall contain the following information:

- (i) The name and address of the child
- (ii) The date of birth and gender of the child
- (iii) The names, addresses and contact numbers of the parents/guardians
- (iv) The PPS number of the child
- (v) The names and addresses of siblings and details of their schooling
- (vi) The nationality of the parents and the child.
- (vii) An original copy of the state birth certificate of the child shall be appended to the application. This will be copied and the original returned.
- (viii) All school reports and relevant data including any information regarding special needs.

An incomplete or inaccurate enrolment form constitutes an invalid enrolment application.

It is a requirement that the Board of Management receives information from the school from which the pupil has departed in regard to attendance and educational progress, behaviour and particular needs if necessary in accordance with the Educational Welfare Act 2000. The Board through the principal will inform the previous school of the child's enrolment.

Parents/Guardians of children enrolled in Junior Infants will be invited to a meeting in the school and their child will be invited to a 'Meet & Greet' in May each year.

5.2 PUPILS TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL

In keeping with the Education Welfare Act 2000, a parent may transfer his/her child from one National School to another, at any time of the year, either with the consent of the Minister or when the transfer is made because of a change in the ordinary residence of the child. This is also subject to school policy and available space. When the application for enrolment is made the Principal shall ascertain from the parent whether the pupil was previously enrolled in another National School. In order to assess the needs of the child, the principal will seek all reports relating to that child from the principal of the school where the child previously attended. Parents are asked to give their permission to the principal of Galway Steiner NS to seek such information on the enrolment application form.

5.3 CRITERIA FOR ENROLMENT:

5.3.1 AGE:

In accordance with the Steiner model of age-appropriate learning, ideally children should be 4 on or before 1st March in the year they are due to start school. Exceptions can be considered but only after the principal meets with the parents/guardians and the child. However, under the Education Act 1998, a child may not be allowed to attend or be enrolled in a primary school before the 4th anniversary of his/her birth.

This criteria will be reviewed by the Board of Management bi-annually.

5.3.2 ENROLMENT POLICY:

Each child will be placed on the relevant class list on application according to a pre-enrolment number. No guarantees of places are given or implied by pre-enrolment.

5.3.3 OFFERS OF PLACES:

Offers of places will be in the third week of January in consultation with the other schools in Knocknacarra. A decision on whether to first send letters to parents to confirm interest in early January will be made by the Board of Management on a year by year basis by the board depending on numbers.

Children will be offered places strictly following the ranking of the pre-enrolment numbers on the pre-enrolment list. Offers will be made by letter along with and an email informing the parents that the letter was sent.

Parents who do not accept the place by the indicated deadline will automatically forfeit the place and it will be offered to the next child on the waiting list. They may at any time re-add their child to the list but in this case he/she will be added at the bottom of the list.

Parents who wish to defer their child's date of entry by one year (and who are eligible to do so) may do this but they should note that deferral of an **'offered place'** does not guarantee a place the following year. This is because children will be transferred into the list for the subsequent year according to the date on which they registered their child initially.

It is the sole responsibility of the parents to inform the Galway Steiner School promptly of any change of address, telephone number or other relevant circumstances.

If a child leaves during the school year, his/her place may be back-filled. The place may be offered to the next person on the list for the same class. If there is no child on the list for the same class who wishes to take up the offer, the place may be offered to a child on the list for a different class. This will be decided in conjunction with the Principal and the Board of Management.

5.4 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. This policy shall be implemented and govern all allocations of places in Galway National Steiner School.
2. In the event of a child not being in a position to take a place offered in the school and the Board of Management accept that the reason is such that special consideration should be given, then the child's parents or guardians shall be offered the opportunity of leaving the child on a list and priority in relation to future applications for placement shall be given to that child, providing the child makes an application and there is such an appropriate place available. This list shall be kept in the school and shall be known as a "priority list". Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, incapacity by way of illness shall be considered to be such an appropriate criterion.
3. Parents who accept a place for their child in Galway Steiner National School should not accept an offer of a place in another Galway school and if they have already done so they must notify that school immediately of their change of mind, forfeiting the place in that school.

5.5 EXCEPTIONS TO FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED RULE

Children applying for places who have siblings already in the school will be facilitated within the limits stated above and depending on the needs of the child (see Enrolment of Special Needs)

Children of permanent staff working in the school and applying for places will be facilitated per conditions below and keeping within the limits stated above and depending on the needs of the child (see Enrolment of Special Needs children, below).

Children of permanent school staff have a right of entry provided the pre-enrolment form has been completed in respect of the child prior to its first birthday.

In the event of newly appointed staff, whose children do not qualify under this exception, the application for priority must be accepted by the Board of Management or its delegated authority.

5.6 ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The criteria used in decision making with regard to enrolment apply to all children including children with special needs. No child will be refused enrolment in Galway Steiner National School because of a disability or 'special need'.

Parents are asked on the application form to list, detail and attach any reports/assessments/needs their child has had since the time they were born, or any concerns they may have about their child's behaviour or needs. The child's admission to the school may be deferred until the BoM has time to assess how the school could meet the needs specified in reports and until resources are in place to meet the child's needs.

Having received an application form, the school will meet with the parents, to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. The Board of Management of Galway Steiner NS through the principal, will request a copy of all the child's medical and/or psychological report/s. If reports are not available the Board will request that the child be assessed immediately. Reports are requested to assist the school in establishing the educational and caring needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special education needs and to profile the support services required. Following receipt of the report, the Principal on behalf of the BoM will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. If necessary, a full case conference involving all parties may be held. Following consultation and examination of reports if the BoM using balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children, deems that the school is unable to meet the needs of the child, it may decide to defer admission of the enrolled child until the resources the child needs are in place in the school, for example a ramp to allow wheelchair access. Every effort will be made to install the resources the child needs quickly in school with the intention of admitting the child as speedily as possible.

Where the Board deems that resources are required, the principal, on behalf of the BoM will apply to the Special Education Needs officer (SENO) for the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: teacher for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other. The BoM in consultation with the DES may arrange home tuition for the enrolled child until the resources they need are available in the school.

6 APPEALS

The Board of Management of Galway Steiner National School in compliance with section 19(3) of the Educational Welfare Act 2000 will make a decision in writing in respect of an application for enrolment within 21 days of the closing date for the receipt of enrolment applications and will inform the parents/guardians in writing of that decision.

Parents/guardians will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to a refusal to enrol in the letter issued 21 days after the closing date for the receipt of applications. (Please note the address at which the applicant resides will be the address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment).

If the Board of Management refuses to enrol a student in the school, the parent/guardian of the student may appeal the decision at local level. The appeal must be submitted within 10 days of the date of the refusal to enrol. It must be made in writing, addressed to the Chairperson of the Board, and clearly state the grounds for the appeal. The Board of Management will respond within 10 days of the receipt of such an appeal.

If following the conclusion of the appeal procedures at school level, a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the decision made that parent/guardian has a statutory entitlement under section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. It should be noted that such an appeal must be lodged within 42 days of the schools refusal to enrol.

Details on appealing decisions on enrolment under section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007), are available on the Department of Education and Skills website at www.education.ie

7 INTAKE SUBSEQUENT TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF JUNIOR INFANTS

1. We accept children who wish to join Senior Infants/1st Class/2nd Class/3rd class if they are 5/6/7/8 on or before 1st March in the year they are due to start that class. Exceptions to this may be made if it means a child coming from another school would be entering in Galway Steiner NS a class below.

This criteria was reviewed by the Board of Management in June 2017 and will be reviewed again bi-annually.

2. It is preferable that there be no intake into classes during the school year and this policy shall be taken into account in all applications for enrolment as it is the view that such intake can on balance be disruptive.

However, In keeping with the Education Welfare Act 2000, a parent may transfer his/her child from one National School to another, at any time of the year, either with the consent of the Minister or when the transfer is made because of a change in the ordinary residence of the child. At the discretion of the Board of Management and, on receipt of an application form, exceptions are made for families relocating during the school year.

8 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Children enrolled in Galway Steiner National School are required to co-operate and support the school's Code of Behaviour as well as all other school policies on curriculum, organisation and management.

The Board of Management places parents or guardians responsible for ensuring that their child co-operates with said policies in an age appropriate way. In signing the application form you are agreeing to the terms of the school's code of behaviour and you are undertaking to co-operate with and support the school in implementing this code of behaviour. Policies on the school website <https://galwaysteinerschool.com/policies/> Parents/Guardians of new entrants are furnished with a hard copy of the code of behaviour on enrolment. The school reserves the right to shorten the day of a pupil, and by doing so it is hoped that the time spent in school will be within the limits of what the child can cope with, and at the same time allows the other children a time during which their needs may be focused on by the teacher.

9 MEDICATION

Parents are asked to inform the school in writing if their child suffers from any long term or short term illness and if their child is on medication and to familiarise themselves with the school Medical Policy which is available on the school's website <https://galwaysteinerschool.com/policies/>

10 EXCEPTIONAL CASES

The Board of Management of Galway Steiner National School reserves the right to refuse enrolment or, to rescind an offer of enrolment to any child, in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

The child has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education, or

In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

The Board will act in the best interests of the children who wish to enrol taking into account the suitability of the facilities in the building. In the case of a profoundly disabled child where alterations etc. cannot reasonably be made in time for entry (if at all).

11 EVALUATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

11.1 EVALUATION

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the Policy and review and amend the Policy as required, with particular emphasis placed upon:

Effective management of the application process

Clarity and transparency relating to the process

Sufficient time of notice to applicants regarding the status of their application, particularly in the case of refusal to enroll.

Positive Parental feedback

11.2 MONITORING PROCEDURES

The implementations of this policy will be monitored by the Board of Management at the appropriate time. It will also be referred by the Principal to the full staff for consideration at the same time. The Principal will report to the Board of Management regarding the process of enrolment in January each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete. Where the Principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated to him by the Board in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

11.2.1 REVIEW PROCEDURE

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every two years. Any staff member, board member, parent, guardian or student who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

12 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Galway Steiner National School on the 21, January 2016 and updated on 27.02.2017, 12.06.2017, 06.07.2017, 14.01.2019 and again on 20.06.2019

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

To be reviewed: June 2021