# **Admission Policy**

**Admission Policy of St. Oliver Plunkett N.S.**

**School Address:**

**Sandy Lane,**

**Blackrock,**

**Dundalk,**

**County Louth**

**A91 AK57**

**Roll number:**

**15285D**

**School Patron:**

**Archbishop Eamon Martin, the Archdiocese of Armagh.**

## **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 18th August 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 the St. Oliver Plunkett N.S. admission process are set out in the school’s annual admission notice which is published annually on the school’s website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school’s website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

The address, at which the applicant resides, will be the only address used by the school for correspondence regarding enrolment.

The completion of an enrolment application form or the placement of your child’s name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.

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

Saint Oliver Plunkett National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic Ethos under the trusteeship of the RC Archbishop of Armagh.

‘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:

1. The full and harmonious development of of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
2. A living relationship with God and with people; and
3. A philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
4. The formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith;

and which school provides religious education in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

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

The ethos (or characteristic spirit) of Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S., Blackrock encompasses collective attitudes, beliefs, core values, traditions, aspirations and goals. These are reflected in the actual practices which are carried out in the school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. While it is impossible to outline all aspects of the school ethos, the following characteristics are experienced and promoted as essential elements in the establishment of a supportive and positive ethos:

* In Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S., where the ethos is that of a Catholic school, religious instruction, in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church is part of the education given to children who belong to that Church.
* The pupils are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, in accordance with arrangements in the diocese
* Prayer is a feature of the school day.
* The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.
* The Principal and teaching staff aim at maintaining high professional standards and creating a safe and happy environment *(as per Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers).*
* A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities.
* Close contact is maintained between school and home. Parents / guardians and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another in leading the children to the fullness of their potential at the different stages.
* It is our wish that all visitors to the school would sense, upon entering the premises, the warmth, friendship and collegiality of the whole school community.
* Members of the school’s support staff and ancillary staff are highly esteemed and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education in this school.
* Saint Oliver Plunkett National School is a Catholic primary school which strives to provide a structured, caring, happy and secure environment where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of all the pupils are identified and addressed.
* While Saint Oliver Plunkett National School is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions and for those with none.
* The School will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of all staff through staff development programmes.
* The School will encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in their children’s education through home/school contacts and through their involvement in the Parents’ Association.
* The School will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.
* We will promote gender equity amongst the teachers and pupils.

## **Admission Statement**

St. Oliver Plunkett National School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

1. the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
2. the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
3. the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
4. the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
5. the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
6. the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
7. the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
8. the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
9. 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. Oliver Plunkett N.S. will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

St. Oliver Plunkett N.S. will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

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| **All denominational schools**  **Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S.** 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. |

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

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| 1. **In the case of a special school**   **Not applicable**   1. **In the case of a mainstream school with a SEN class attached**   **Not applicable** |

## **Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

1. the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#_Oversubscription_(this_section) below for further details)
2. 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

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| **All denominational schools**  Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. is a Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic Faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. |

## **Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)**

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:

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| **Insert selection criteria here**   1. *Siblings of present students and past students (including step-siblings resident at the same address – priority to the oldest).* 2. *Children permanently residing within the parish/agreed catchment area, including children of the travelling community residing within the parish/agreed catchment area.* The school catchment area is defined as the Parish of Haggardstown and Blackrock. The following exceptions will apply: 3. Siblings of children already enrolled in the school 4. Children of permanent staff members 5. *Age of the child* 6. *Children of permanent Staff members* 7. *Children whose home address is closest to the school (as measured by a straight line on an OS map) if the child is normally resident outside the parish/agreed catchment area*   **-** |

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:

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| For admissions into Junior Infants: In the scenario where the school is oversubscribed, The Board of Management will apply the five selection criteria above in the order of priority in which they are listed. In the event of a tie for the final place, the Board will then determine the access to the final place by choosing the eldest of the tied applicants. In the event of more than one tied applicant having the same date of birth, the Board of Management will draw lots between these tied applicants for the last place. The Board will keep the remaining applicants on a waiting list for cancellations arising before the school year begins. |

## **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:

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| 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:   1. a student’s prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí, 2. the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school; 3. a student’s academic ability, skills or aptitude; 4. the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student’s parents; 5. a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission; 6. 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 wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.  In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school’s annual admission notice).   1. 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.  This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only). |

## **Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. 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](#_Late_Applications) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#_Procedures_for_admission)  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.

The Board of Management will have regard for the relevant DES guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions and/or other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and health and safety for children.

The Board of Management is bound by the DES Rules for National Schools which provides that children may only be enrolled from the age of 4 and upwards. Children must have reached their fourth birthday, at least, before they start school at Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S.

## **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](#_Reviews/appeals) below for further details).

## **Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S., 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 to the Principal of Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. 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 to the Principal of Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S.

## **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 Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. where—

1. it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
2. 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.
3. 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
4. an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in [section 10](#_Acceptance_of_an) above.

## **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)

## **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 Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. 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 Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. 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. The criterion date of birth of the child applying will only be applied in the case of children who are tied for the last place in the Junior Infant intake classes. When children are tied for the final places in classes above Junior Infants, after all of the criteria in section 6 of this policy are applied, lots will be drawn for the final pace and the remaining applicants will be kept on a waiting list for any places becoming available later.

## **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.

## **Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

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| The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes other than the school’s intake group are as follows:  Parents/Guardians complete an application form.  Application is assessed by the BOM using the criteria in Section 6 of this admissions policy.  Such applications will be dealt on a case by case basis but will normally be only considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area. The Board may also take into consideration information provided concerning attendance and the child’s educational progress.  Admission will depend on space in the required class. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the BoM reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:   * *size of /available space in classrooms* * *educational needs of children of a particular age* * *multi-grade classes* * *presence of children with special educational/ behavioural needs* * *DES maximum class average directives (as determined by the inspectorate)* |

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| 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:  The procedures of the school in this instance include those in the table above. However Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. will recommend to applicants seeking places after September 30th of each year and whose children are attending schools in the locality, that where possible, they retain their children in their current schools until the end of the instructional term (i.e. the end of October, December or after Easter). |

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

1. an application for admission of a student to the school, or
2. the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

## **Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

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

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| Our school has a Catholic Ethos and, in keeping with this ethos, children of all or no other faiths are welcome to apply to this school.  The following are the school’s arrangements for pupils, where the parent~~s~~/guardians or in the case of a pupil who has reached 18 years of age, the pupil, who has requested that the pupil attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such pupils:  **A written request should be made to the Principal of the School. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s)/guardian(s) or the pupil, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.** |

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## **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 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.

1. **Implementation and Review**

This policy will be implemented for the school year 2020-2021 and thereafter it will be reviewed by the Board of Management every three years.

1. **Policy Ratification**

After the approval of the Patron, this policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Saint Oliver Plunkett N.S. on 18th August 2020.

Signed: Fr. Padraig Keenan

Chairperson BOM

Signed: Catherine Dempsey Date: 18th August 2020.

Principal

The contents of this policy has been approved by Ms. Niamh Black, acting on behalf of the school’s patron, the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Armagh.