

Kentstown National School

Enrolment and Admissions Policy

Introductory Statement:

The Board of Management of Kentstown National School is setting out this Enrolment and Admissions Policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and the sections of the Education Act 2018 which came into operation on October 3rd 2018. The purpose of this policy is to assist parents in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Principal will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this policy.

Mission Statement:

Kentstown National School is a Catholic Primary School of both girls and boys, under the Patronage of His Lordship, Bishop of Meath. The mission of the school is to provide a comprehensive, inclusive and accessible education of the highest quality, which will enable our pupils to develop to their full potential as persons - spiritually, socially, physically and morally.

Kentstown National School is committed to providing a caring, happy and secure educational environment which is free from discrimination, threats, bullying and harassment for all. We endeavour to enhance the self esteem of everyone in the school community, offering equal opportunities for all pupils to develop to their full potential, in a well ordered and disciplined atmosphere, where parental involvement is encouraged and the wider community is served.

With a view to providing the highest possible teaching standards, we actively promote staff development on an individual and whole staff basis. This is a Catholic primary school which fosters gospel values and holds our Catholic ethos as a cornerstone of school life.

The school depends on grants and teacher resources, provided by the Department of Education and Science, and operates under Rules for National Schools and Department Circulars. The school is subject to The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (2004), Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), equality law and all other relevant legislation.

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School Information:

Name of school: Kentstown National School

Contact Details: Phone: 041-9825458 Email: kentstownns.ias@eircom.net

Patron: His Lordship, Bishop of Meath

Staff: Principal Teacher, Class Teachers (10), SET Teachers (2)

Classes: Mixed sex, vertical school with classes from Junior Infants to Sixth

Opening Time: Classes begin at 09:00

Closing Times: Infants finish at 13:40; All other classes finish at 14:40

Further Information: See School Information Booklet (available on school website www.kentstownschool.ie and from the school office)

Rationale and Aims:

This school, being a parish based school, serves the people of Kentstown in the Catholic Parish of Beauparc. It is a Catholic School which has been established with the Minister for Education and Skills, having as its patron His Lordship, the Bishop of Meath. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This Catholic School provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of pupils in the Catholic Faith. It is necessary to have this policy so that our enrolment procedures and practices are known and that parents can consult them when seeking to enrol a child in our school. In this policy, we aim to outline clearly the procedure for application and enrolment.

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This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to:

- Make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with the Mission Statement and Ethos of the school and all legislative requirements.
- Make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants, in light of resources available to it.
- Put in place a framework, which will ensure effective and productive relations between pupils, parents and teachers, where a pupil is admitted to the school.

Role of the Board of Management

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed.
- To appraise this policy, with regards to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvements where appropriate.
- To decide on appeals made by parents, with respect to any decision(s) made by the Board.

Role of the Principal

- To formulate a draft policy in consultation with teaching staff, parents and the Board of Management.
- To monitor its implementation and to ensure it is reviewed.
- To apply for and acquire resources, as are available in accordance with government policies.
- To ensure, within the constraints of available resources, that alternative programmes are devised where necessary and practicable to meet the needs of the pupils.
- To ensure a register of all pupils attending the school is established and maintained.
- To ensure that a record of attendance or non-attendance is maintained for each pupil registered and in the case of non-attendance, the reason for same.
- Prior to registering the child, to provide the parents with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and to ensure that they confirm in writing their acceptance of this code.
- Where a child is refused admission, to advise parents of their right of appeal to the Board of Management and the Department of Education, setting out the title and address of each, and advising them of the time limits.

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Role of Parents

- To support the policy and co-operate fully with the school in its implementation.
- To bring to the attention of the school authorities any special needs their child has, or any concerns they have in relation to the school's provision for the educational needs of their child.
- To appraise the policy with regards to its suitability and to make recommendations where appropriate.

Enrolment Procedure

The Board of Management, in accordance with school policy, will make all decisions in relation to applications for enrolment. Prospective parents may make an appointment, via the school secretary, to meet with the principal to view the school and discuss enrolment.

1. Enrolment process is initiated on receipt of written notice (by email/post/hand delivered) of intent to enrol a child. This notice is to be addressed to the school office. This notice should include the child's name, date of birth and telephone contact number(s) for the parent(s).
2. Enrolment Application Forms will be sent to all who have submitted 'intent to enrol' in early December of the year prior to enrolment. Where both parents have joint – guardianship (as in the automatic case of married parents, or where an unmarried father has applied for and been granted joint – guardianship) both signatures are required on the Enrolment Application Form. In the case of single guardianship, this signature alone is required.
3. The closing date for the return of these forms is January 31st in the year of enrolment.
4. Along with a completed Enrolment Application Form parents must submit;
 - a) an original Birth/Adoption Certificate for state purposes
 - b) a Baptismal Cert (where relevant) for church purposes, for all children baptised outside of the parish
 - c) Signed acceptance of the school Code of Behaviour. It is mandatory that parents confirm, by signing the Enrolment Application Form, that they have read the attached Code of Behaviour, that it is acceptable to them, and that they will make all reasonable effort to ensure that their child complies with the school code.
5. All applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome within twenty-one days of the closing date for submission of completed Enrolment Application Forms.

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6. In the cases where admission is refused, parents may appeal to the Board of Management. This appeal must be addressed to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. If unhappy with the result of the appeal, they may then appeal to the Department of Education and Skills on the official form provided by the Department (Section 29 Education Act). This appeal must be lodged within forty-two days of receipt of refusal from the school. **Only parents/guardians of the child seeking a place may engage in the appeals process.**
7. Where an applicant is successful, parents will be requested to inform the school in writing, within ten days, of whether they wish to accept the offered place or not.
8. There is a meeting held for prospective parents in late May/early June.
9. Incoming Junior Infants spend one informal period in the school at the end of May/early June to familiarise themselves with their new environment.
10. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the rules governing national schools, as well as our own school's Enrolment and Admissions Policy. Pupils may transfer to the school during the school year subject to school policy, available space, and in some cases the approval of the Department of Education and Skills. The Education Welfare Act(2000) contains some specific provisions in relation to the transfer of pupils including the requirement that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress, should be communicated between schools.

Enrolment Criteria

1. Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.
2. While recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, The Board of Management of Kentstown National School, is also responsible to respect the rights of the existing school community and, in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:
 - a) Size of/available space in classrooms
 - b) Educational needs of children of a particular age
 - c) Multi-grade classes
 - d) Presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs
 - e) Department of Education and Skills maximum class average directives

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3. The Board of Management is bound by DES Rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of four years and up, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of six years.
4. In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class/standard exceeding the number of places available preceding or during the school year, the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment, and in the following order:
 - a) Sisters and brothers of pupils currently in the school
 - b) Children of current staff, including ancillary staff
 - c) Children living within the parish boundary
 - d) Children living outside the parish boundary
5. In the event that the number of pupils, seeking enrolment from categories a, b and c exceeds the number of pupils for a single class, the school will apply a cut off for enrolment based on age with reference to the above noted categories, all other DES requirements being met.
6. Children enrolled in our school are required to co-operate with, and support the School/Board of Management Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. The BoM places responsibility on parents/guardians for ensuring that their child(ren) co-operate with said policies in an age-appropriate way.

Enrolment of Children with Special Needs

1. In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs, the decision to enrol will be taken in accordance with the Admissions and Enrolment Policy. However, the Board of Management, will require a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or, where such a report is not available, to request that the child be assessed immediately.
2. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.
3. Following receipt of the relevant report, the Board will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will request the Department of Education and Skills to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological/medical report.

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4. These resources may include for example, access to, or provision of, any or a combination of the following; visiting teacher service, resource teacher for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services etc.
5. The school will meet with the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. If necessary, a full case conference which may include, parents, principal, class teacher, special education teacher, psychologist, OT as appropriate should be held.

Exceptional Circumstances

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any pupil in exceptional circumstances. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

1. The pupil 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 pupil with an appropriate education or
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, to school staff or property.

The parents of any pupil who has been refused enrolment, for any reason, are entitled to appeal the refusal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and in such circumstances, should be advised in writing of their entitlement to such an appeal.

Policy Monitoring and Review

The policy is available to view on the school website and through the office in the school.

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and amend it, as required, with particular emphasis on;

- Effective management of the application process
- Clarity and transparency relating to the process
- Parental feedback

This policy will be reviewed by teaching staff and the Board of Management every five years or sooner, if prompted by legislative changes.