



Admission Policy of St Vincent's Special School
School Address: Navan Road, Dublin 7
Roll number: 190391

School Patron/s: Archbishop of Dublin
Trustees: Daughters of Charity

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 July 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 St Vincent's 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 hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Vincent's Special School is a co-educational school for People with Intellectual Disabilities. The school is designated by the Department of Education and Skills as a Special School for pupils aged 5-18 years with Moderate Intellectual Disabilities, based on psychological testing. The school also has two special classes specifically catering for pupils with an additional diagnosis of Autism.

St. Vincent's School supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Equality of access and participation in the school (depending on resources available from the Department of Education and Skills)
- Parent/guardian choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for delivery of values, beliefs, traditions, language and ways of life in society

3. Admission Statement

St Vincent's 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,



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- (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. Vincent's Special School will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its function 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. Vincent's 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 Vincent's Special School, is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for pupils with a Moderate Intellectual Disability and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a pupil who does not have the category of needs specified.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

St Vincent's Special School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education for students, who on Psychological testing have a Moderate Intellectual Disability.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each pupil seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- b) a parent/guardian of a pupil, 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 pupil.
- c) St Vincent's Special School, provides an education exclusively for pupils with moderate intellectual disability and may refuse admission to a pupil, where the pupil does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

6. Oversubscription



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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:

1. All prospective school placements are assessed initially by the In-School Management Team within St Vincent's Special School. All available professional reports such as Psychiatric assessments, Psychological reports, Speech and Language reports, Social work reports, Occupational Therapy reports, Physiotherapy reports and Medical reports must be made available before 31st January 2025.
2. Pupils must be 5 years of age on or by 1st September of the academic year in which they are applying. Pupils who have reached the age of 18 years on or before 31st August will be prepared for leaving the school.
3. All children applying for enrolment are assessed by a registered Psychologist in order to meet the criteria for enrolment. This report must state that the student is diagnosed with a Moderate Intellectual Disability.
4. The catchment area for St. Vincent's Special School is catchment area 6 Dublin North West (formally LH06). A pupil will only be considered for a school place if he/she lives within this designated catchment area.
5. There is a place available in an age appropriate class.
6. For admission to the Autism Classes, the child must meet the criteria under the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (V) or the child must be recommended by a Psychologist for placement in such a class. The child must have a dual diagnosis of autism and a moderate intellectual disability. Priority is given to pupils currently enrolled within the school if movement to an autism specific class is required. Priority is also given to pupils currently enrolled within the school progressing from the junior to the senior autism class.
7. The pupil can learn in a classroom environment with other pupils using an eclectic approach, suitable in the main body of the school or within the autism classes
8. The school environment can meet the needs of the pupil profile.
9. The school has relevant available resources to meet the particular needs of the pupil.
10. The profile of the proposed class group is appropriate to the needs of the pupil.
11. Those who meet the criteria above will be prioritised for the waitlist.
12. During the course of the year, a child can be placed on the waitlist.

The Board of Management of St. Vincent's Special School reserves the right to refuse to enrol a pupil in rare and exceptional circumstances. Based on information in professional reports and/or from previous schools/centres, the grounds for refusal on exceptional circumstances include:

- 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.
- The pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils and may compromise their education.
- The pupil poses an unacceptable risk to school staff and / or school property.

When recognising the rights of the parents/guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St. Vincent's Special School has also a responsibility to respect the



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rights of the existing school community and in particular the pupils already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and the best interests of all the pupils.

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:

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place in any of the selection criteria categories above a draw will be made using random selection. Parents/guardians will be invited to attend this draw. If a parent/guardian is unable to attend they may nominate someone to attend in their place. This draw will be overseen by an independent witness.

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 pupil on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
 - (I) an early intervention class, or
 - (II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- (f) 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 Vincent's Special School will be based on the following:

- The school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- The information provided by the parent/guardian in the school's official application form received during the period specified in the school's annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)



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Selection criteria that are not included in the school's Admission Policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in the 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 pupil is not offered a place in the school, the reasons why he/she was not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the parent/guardian, including, where applicable, details of the pupil's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the pupil's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Parents/Guardians 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 Vincent's Special School parents/guardians 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 Vincent's Special School where—

- (i) It is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) A parent/guardian on behalf of the 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/guardian of a pupil, 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 pupil; or
- (iv) The parent/guardian on behalf of the 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.

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription



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In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of pupils whose applications for admission to St Vincent's 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 Vincent's Special School is in the order of priority assigned to the pupils' 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 pupils on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the pupils have been placed on the list. During the course of the year, a child can be placed on the waitlist.

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 the school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of pupils who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

Due to the varying age groups of the applicants, it is likely that they will require entry to classes other than the junior room.

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of pupils who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

The applicant will be considered for a space if a space becomes available in an age appropriate and suitable needs class. Priority is given to pupils enrolled within the school to transition to another class e.g. to the autism specific classes.

Applications should be sent to the School and the Admission and Discharge Team.

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

The Board of Management of St Vincent's 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 pupil to the school, or
- (b) The admission or continued enrolment of a pupil in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding pupils not attending religious instruction

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) Parents can request in writing that their child does not participate in religious instruction or events and will be provided with an alternative educational opportunity.



18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian of the pupil, or in the case of a pupil who has reached the age of 18 years, the pupil, may request the Board of Management 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 of Management 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 parent/guardian on behalf of 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 parent/guardian on behalf of 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 pupil, or in the case of a pupil who has reached the age of 18 years, the pupil 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 parent/guardian on behalf of 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 parent/guardian on behalf of 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.

Ratification & Communication:



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This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 26th September 2024 and communicated to the school community thereafter. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron, if requested.

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

Mary Keane

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 26th September 2024

Cathy Cawley

Secretary, Board of Management/Principal

Date: 26th September 2024