

Admission Policy of Brackloon NS
School Address: Brackloon, Westport, Co. Mayo
Roll number: 04796R
School Patron: Archbishop Francis Duffy

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 reviewed by the BOM on 24/09/25 and sent to the school patron on 03/11/25 for patron approval. It will be 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 Brackloon NS 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.

Parents are required to notify the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) by 1st **October of the current academic year** if seeking a placement for their child in the school's special class for the following academic year. For example, if you wish to enrol a child for the 2026/27 academic year, you must notify the NCSE by October 2025. A letter from the NCSE confirming that a child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class is a prerequisite for enrolment in Brackloon NS's special class, Cairde na Coille.

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

All denominational schools

Brackloon NS 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 of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Schools with special education class(es)

Brackloon NS is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

Brackloon NS is a Co-educational Catholic school under the patronage of Archbishop Francis Duffy. In accordance with S15 (2) (6) of the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management of Brackloon NS 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.

In Brackloon NS the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God is acknowledged and affirmed. The Catholic School is an inclusive community, ideally built on love and formed by the interaction and collaboration of its various components: pupils, parents, teachers, non teaching staff and members of the BOM. Catholic schools are also outward looking. They are connected to their local parish and Diocese and other local organisations which enrich the life of the school. Our school draws on the rich resources of the community and, in turn, contributes to the life of the local community.

While Brackloon NS is a Catholic school it also welcomes children of different faiths and none. At enrolment parents will be made aware of the school's ethos and it will be explained to parents what provision can be made for children who are not of the catholic faith.

Brackloon NS Mission Statement

Our aim is to provide for the holistic development of the child, taking into account the needs of children of widely varying natural endowment and background.

Our aim is that each child will be enabled to :-

- obtain optimum personal fulfilment.
- learn in accordance with his/her age, ability, aptitude and interests.

We are committed to promoting:-

- the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, moral and social development of each child.
- the self-esteem and self respect of each individual child in a safe, caring and welcoming environment.

We aim to inculcate in pupils:-

- Christian values and ethos
- positive attitudes of praise, affirmation and encouragement.
- pride in their own environment.
- pride in their native language, heritage and culture.

Mol an oige agus tiocfaidh si.

Admission Policy Rationale:

This policy aims to ensure that 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 of the School, the admissions policy as defined by the Board of Management and legislative requirements.
- To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants.

Management

The school is run by a Board of Management comprising of two patron nominees, two community nominees, two parent nominees and one teacher nominee. The school principal acts as secretary to the Board.

Curriculum

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 & 30 of the Education Act 1998.

Extra-curricular activities

To complement the formal curriculum and enhance the holistic development of the student the school provides a wide range of activities including sports, music, Irish dancing etc.

Funding

The school receives state funding to run the school. The school aims to maintain a high standard in all areas of the educational service offered and as there is a significant gap between state funding to schools and the real cost of educating pupils the school relies on the support of the Home School Association (H/S/A) who among other supports offered to parents, organises fundraising events at the school to make up this shortfall. This fundraising is essential to the school for the maintenance and upgrading of school facilities/resources/services. The support of all parents for H/S/A fundraising efforts is vital and greatly appreciated by the Board of Management.

3. Admission Statement

Brackloon NS 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.

Brackloon NS is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Brackloon NS 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 of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Schools with special education class(es)

Brackloon NS is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

Special Education Provision

Special Class attached to mainstream school.

The school acknowledges the rights of all children to an education, including children who have a disability or other special needs as they relate to education pursuant to the Constitution and the Education Act, 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2008.

- Brackloon NS 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 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.
- Brackloon NS 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.

Brackloon NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a special class to provide an education exclusively for pupils with multiple disabilities. Applications from parents/guardians of pupils with other disabilities are welcome, provided the school can meet their special educational needs. The Board, with consultation from all concerned parties, will decide whether the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with the best interests of the pupil.

In order to ensure that the school can adequately prepare for the child's needs it gathers information in relation to special educational needs from a variety of sources including using school-based data and information from parents and external professionals. These sources include the following.

- Consultation with pre - school personnel
- Consultation with parents on receipt of enrolment applications with identified needs.
- Consultation with NEPS psychologists and other support professionals, with parents' permission
- Consultation with SENo and Early Years Intervention – Safari Club

Eligibility Criteria for Special Class Admission

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for **children with multiple disabilities** 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 children with multiple disabilities**.

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.

Application Process and Enrolment - Procedures

Application for a place in Brackloon NS implies that parents/guardians are confirming that they have read and agree to adhere to the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline policy. The Board will determine the number of places it can offer for new enrolments. This will be reviewed on a yearly basis.

The Board strongly recommend that pupils to be enrolled at Brackloon NS will have reached their 4th birthday by 28th February prior to starting at Brackloon NS in September of that year. Applications must be accompanied by a birth certificate, PPS number and relevant educational reports if available. Details of registration are advertised in local press, parish newsletter and through school communication to all parents.

Application for a place in Brackloon NS's special class must include a letter from the NCSE confirming that a child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class.

6. Oversubscription

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:

Selection Criteria

- Applicants from Brackloon NS catchment area
- Applicants who are the children of staff currently employed by Brackloon NS
- Applicants outside the Brackloon NS catchment area

Cairde na Coille

The school's Special Class for pupils with Multiple disabilities – Cairde na Coille has a maximum capacity of 6 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:

- Priority to eldest pupils (mainstream placement)
- Priority to the pupil whose needs are best met by placement in Cairde na Coille Special Class.

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:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naónraí,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
(other than in relation to:
 - admission to a special class 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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January of the current academic year).

Enrolment in the school's special class requires a letter from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). Parents are required to notify the NCSE by 1st October of the current academic year if seeking a placement for their child in the school's special class for the following academic year.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Brackloon NS 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

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 Brackloon NS 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 Brackloon NS 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.

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 Brackloon NS 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 Brackloon NS 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. The waiting list for Cairde na Coille also operates under these terms.

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.

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

Enrolment of pupils who are transferring from another school will only be considered for the start of a new term except in exceptional circumstances e.g. a child moving home from another country or part of Ireland.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Brackloon NS 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. 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.

Signed: _____

Date: _____