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Admission Policy of Scoil Cholmcille

School Address: Newtowncunningham, Lifford, Donegal

Email: principal@scoilcholmcill Newtown.ie

Roll number: 16820E

School Patron: Bishop of Raphoe, Niall Coll

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 in December 2025. 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 Scoil Cholmcille 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 available from the school office on request to any person who requests it.

2. CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOOL

Scoil Cholmcille is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Raphoe.

“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:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine, 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 S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Scoil Cholmcille 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.

Scoil Cholmcille places our pupil’s happiness at the centre of everything we do. The educational progress and wellbeing of each child is of core consideration in all decisions and actions taken by our school community. We believe in providing a holistic education for our pupils, empowering the Christian values of kindness, respect, honesty and inclusion, to ensure high quality, engaging, robust and enjoyable learning experiences for every child.

Children of all faiths and none, are very welcome to attend our school.

3. ADMISSION STATEMENT

Scoil Cholmcille will not discriminate in its admission of a pupil to the school on any of the following:

- the gender ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- the civil status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- the family status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- the sexual orientation ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- the religion ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- the disability ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- the ground of race of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- the Traveller community ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned, or
- the ground that the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil 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.

Scoil Cholmcille 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*.

*This statement is mandated by the Department of Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

Special Class September 2026 onwards

Scoil Cholmcille has been sanctioned to open an autism special class for the new school year. September 2026. Once established the special class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, will provide an education exclusively for students with a category of special educational needs specified by the Minister (autism), and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

Scoil Cholmcille will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998.

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

Scoil Cholmcille, with the approval of the Minister of Education, will establish a special class to provide an education exclusively for students with autism.

5. ADMISSION OF PUPILS

This school shall admit each pupil seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed,
- b) a parent 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) Scoil Cholmcille 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*.

*This statement is mandated by the Department of Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

The Board of Management will decide on an annual closing date for application for admission to Scoil Cholmcille's Junior Infant Class and will give reasonable notice of that closing date on the school website and otherwise.

Criteria for Admission

The Board of Management has determined criteria for admission of pupils to Scoil Cholmcille and these criteria are set out hereunder.

The criteria are based on:

1. The primary responsibility of the BoM to cater for the children living in the catchment area of Newtowncunningham and Killea Parish (defined school area).
2. A desire to give effect to family friendly policies allowing children to attend school with their brothers and sisters (including step-siblings, resident at the same address).

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:

1. Brothers and sisters of current pupils in Scoil Cholmcille or who have attended Scoil Cholmcille in the past.
 2. Children resident in the catchment area of Newtowncunningham and Killea Parish (Appendix 1).
 3. Children who are resident outside the parish / agreed catchment area
 4. Applicants not covered by numbers 1-3 above.
- In the event that applications still exceed availability, places will be allocated on the basis of age i.e. priority will be given to older children.
 - In the event that there are two or more pupils 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 place will be offered to the oldest child.

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 pupil's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí;
- the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- a pupil's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a pupil's parents;
- a requirement that a pupil, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;

- a pupil's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; (other than siblings of a pupil attending or having attended the school),
- 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 Scoil Cholmcille 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](#) 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.)

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 pupil 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 pupil's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the pupil'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 Scoil Cholmcille, 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 Scoil Cholmcille 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 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) 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 pupils.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the pupils 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 pupil'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).

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 pupils whose applications for admission to Scoil Cholmcille 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 Scoil Cholmcille 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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.

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.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

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:

- Application form must be completed.
- Pupil will be admitted to the appropriate class level if there is an available place and physical space in classroom.
- Pupils with a diagnosed special educational need of autism and a written professional recommendation for placement in an autism class, may transfer after the commencement of the school year when there is a natural break in the school calendar (midterm, Christmas, Easter), provided that a place is available in the special class.
- In the case where an offer is made places can be held only for a limited time i.e. 2 weeks or until there is another application for the same place and that applicant is willing to take the place immediately or sooner.

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

- Application form must be completed,
- The pupil will be placed on the waiting list,
- The pupil will only be admitted if the Junior Infant classes are not already full.

16. DECLARATION IN RELATION TO THE NON-CHARGING OF FEES

The board of Scoil Cholmcille 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 STUDENTS NOT ATTENDING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The following are the school's arrangements for pupils, where the parents have requested that the pupil attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school: the pupil may engage in other activities within the classroom. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such pupils.

A written request should be made to the principal to the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent to discuss how the request may be accommodated.

18. REVIEWS/APPEALS

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the pupil 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 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 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.

This policy was updated in November 2025.

It was reviewed and ratified by the BoM at their meeting on 02.12.2025.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Principal

Appendix 1

Townlands of Newtowncunningham and Killea Parish

Altaghaderry, Ardee, Ardnadition, Ballybegley, Ballyboe, Ballyhaskey, Ballylawn, Ballylevin, Blanketnook, Bogay, Castleforward, Castruse, Cloon, Colehill, Cottage, Corncamble, Crieve, Deerpark, Dooish, Drumbarnet (Altaghaderry), Drumbarnett, Drumlougher, Drumbuoy, Drummay, Garshuey, Glar, Gortlinlieve, Gortlush, Gortree, Keshends, Kildrum Lower, Kildrum Upper, Killea, Killyverry, Leitrim, Long Lane, Lusticle, Maylin, Milltown, Moneygreggan, Moneymore, Monfad, Monglass, Moyle, Murlough, Newtowncunningham, Plaster, Portlough, Rooskey, Roughan, Sharon, Slatehill, Tinklersford, Tirharin, Tonyhabboc, Tullyannon.