

Admission Policy of Ashton School

School Address: Blackrock Road, Cork

Roll number: 81008W

**School Patron/s: Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork
and Cork Education and Training Board**

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 patrons on 5th June 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 Ashton School'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.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Ethos Statement

Ashton Comprehensive School Cork is a Church of Ireland co-educational school under the joint patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork and the City of Cork Vocational Education Committee (now Cork Education and Training Board). Ashton School serves not only the Protestant community in Cork, but also in a rapidly changing and pluralist society, is committed to the ecumenical developments of our time and in an inclusive spirit of openness and multi-denominational service endeavours to serve many in the entire local community. The school seeks to provide a Christian environment in which students find encouragement to develop spiritual and moral values, personal and social skills and the highest standards of excellence of which they are capable in all aspects of their school activities. We recognise the complementary roles of parents and teachers in educating the young and, in partnership, we pursue the common aim of educating our students according to Christian principles. As a

Comprehensive School, Ashton School is committed to catering for children of all abilities and of multiple intelligences through the provision of a range of subjects across a broad curriculum. Tuition in Ashton School is free: teachers are employed by the Board of Management, and their salaries are paid by the Department of Education and Skills. Parents are expected to provide books and uniform. Assistance with the provision of books and uniform is available in cases of need. Ashton Comprehensive School was founded in 1972 following the interim establishment of the Cork Grammar and Rochelle School as a result of the amalgamation of two noted and established Protestant schools: Cork Grammar School and Rochelle School. Cork Grammar School itself incorporated the former High School. These schools were previously operated under the aegis of the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland. In 2011 the Board of Management was enlarged to include parents and teachers, and the City of Cork V.E.C. (now Cork ETB). became a co-patron, with the Bishop, of the school.

This Ethos Statement has been prepared by the joint patrons of the School in pursuance of Section 15 2 (b) of the Education Act, 1998 and endorsed by the Board of Management.

Mission Statement

Ashton School promotes personal achievement through a broad and balanced education. "The Best" is demanded of and expected for each student. Ashton School operates on the philosophy that students perform best in an environment in which they feel valued. All students are treated as individuals with unique strengths. The philosophy of the school demands high standards of work, personal behaviour and respect of self and of others. The comprehensive range of subjects provide the opportunity, within the resources available, for all students to achieve their potential within their range of abilities. The motivation for excellence is fostered and the breadth of curriculum provides opportunities to excel in many subject areas. The conviction that a happy, well-adjusted, student is the student best prepared and motivated to respond to the challenges and demands, not only of an academic curriculum, but also of life itself, is underpinned by an established Personal & Health Education Programme. Care has been taken to develop procedures and guidelines to deal with discipline and sensitive areas which may affect some students. A comprehensive extra-curricular programme of sport and other activities is provided within the school. These develop the self-esteem of the many students involved and generally promote positive attitudes both at individual and group level. Ashton School strives to create a caring, Christian, environment within which all students can develop and fulfil their unique and diverse talents.

3. Admission Statement

Ashton 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,
- (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.

Ashton School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student who is a member, or who has a parent who is a member, of the Church of Ireland (or other Anglican/Episcopalian Church), or a member of a Church which is a full ecumenical partner of the Church of Ireland, or a member of another Protestant Church, in preference to others.

Ashton School 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 a member, and who has not a parent who is a member, of the Church of Ireland (or other Anglican/Episcopalian Church), or a member of a Church which is a full ecumenical partner of the Church of Ireland, or a member of another Protestant Church, and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 5 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

Ashton School is a Church of Ireland school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of a member, and who has not a parent who is a member, of the Church of Ireland (or other Anglican/Episcopalian Church), or a member of a Church which is a full ecumenical partner of the Church of Ireland, or a member of another Protestant Church, where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

5. 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:

The Board of Management will, in the light of sections 6(e), 9(m) and 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998, give consideration to the following factors:

- whether an applicant and his/her parents/guardians are sympathetic to the ethos of Ashton School.
- the number of available places in Ashton, which in turn involves:
 - the deployment of teachers
 - the resources of the school

- religious denomination (as outlined in Section 1 below) as based on the foundation and Ethos Statement of Ashton School and as advised by the Religious Nominating Authority (the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross) places will be allocated to applicants who show sympathy to the ethos and traditions of the school.

In allocating places priority will be given to applicants satisfying criterion 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. in that order.

1. Applicants who are members of the Church of Ireland (or other Anglican/Episcopalian Churches) or members of Churches which are full ecumenical partners of the Church of Ireland (member churches of the Irish Council of Churches, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland or Conference of European Churches) i.e. Belgian/French/Dutch Reformed Church, Congregational Federation, Lutheran Church, Methodist Church, Moravian Church, Non Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Old Catholic Church, Orthodox Churches, Presbyterian Church, Religious Society of Friends, the Salvation Army and the United Reformed Church
2. Applicants where one or both parents are members of churches listed above
3. Siblings of students currently enrolled in the school and children of employees of the school.
4. Applicants who are members of Protestant Churches other than those listed above.
5. Applicants attending a Church of Ireland Primary School.
6. Siblings of past pupils
7. Applicants where there is a long-established association with, connection to and support of Ashton School.
8. Children of past pupils.
9. Other applicants having regard to (i) sympathy of applicant and his/her parents/guardians to the school ethos, and (ii) gender balance in the school.

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:

Where it is not possible to offer places to all applicants satisfying a particular criterion and where order of priority is not specified within the criterion the priority given to applicants satisfying the criterion will be decided by assigning each applicant a computer-generated random number, ordering the applicants according to the random number assigned to the applicant, and giving highest priority to the applicant assigned the smallest number. The process of assigning computer-generated random numbers to applicants will be supervised by a scrutineer nominated by the Board of Management.

6. 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 naíonraí,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;

- (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 except in the case of (i) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (ii) parents of a student having attended the school (subject to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces in the case of parents having attended as set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice;
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, 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.

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Ashton School 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 on the school's official application form which must be completed in full and received during the period specified in our Annual Admission Notice for receiving applications
- The response to any request by the school for further information, documentation or evidence to allow the school to verify to its satisfaction data relating to the applicant or their parents which has been provided on the application form

(Please see [section 14](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and 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.

8. 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 16](#) below for further details).

9. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Ashton School, 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.

10. 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 Ashton School 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 9 above.

11. 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).

12. 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 Ashton 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 Ashton School 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.

Applicant students whose applications are received after the closing date outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list within the highest criterion that applies to the applicant in the 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 students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

13. 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. Applicant students will be offered a place if a place is available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

14. 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 to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

The Board of Management will decide on admission to any year other than first year by applying the following policy.

In considering the application, the Principal will take into account the availability of an appropriate place in the school (consideration will be given to available subject options, class sizes, availability of staff, etc.) and whether or not a student is currently on the register of another school. Taking these factors into account the Principal will assess whether or not in his opinion a proposed admission:

- complies with the criteria of the school's Admission Policy;
- is in the best interest of the applicant;
- is in the best interest of the School;

provided that:

- all information relevant to the application is made available;
- a consultation takes place, if necessary, with the Educational Welfare Officer.

Based on the foregoing, the Principal will recommend to the Board whether or not a place should be offered to the applicant.

The Board of Management may delegate the responsibility to its chairperson to make a decision on the Principal's recommendation on behalf of the Board so that applications can be processed in a timely fashion.

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

The Board of Management of Ashton 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 student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

16. 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 to 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.