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| Admissions Policy  S:\School Crest\staidans.jpg  ***St Aidan’s Comprehensive School***  Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Chairperson Board of Management  Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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**St Aidan’s Comprehensive School**

**Cootehill**

**Co Cavan**

**81005Q**

**School Patrons: Bishop of Kilmore / Department of Education & Skills**

## **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/guardians of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 14th September 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 Aidan’s Comprehensive School admission process are set out in the school’s annual admission notice which is published yearly 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.

## **Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

**Ethos**

St Aidan’s Comprehensive School is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Bishop of Kilmore and the Department of Education and Skills.

St Aidan’s provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community**.** Comprehensive Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened in September 1966, following the agreed amalgamation of Cootehill Vocational School and St Michael’s School, Cootehill. The Trustees of Cootehill Vocational School were Cavan Vocational Educational Committee and the Trustees of St Michael’s was the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore. St Aidan’s Comprehensive School is a second level school under the joint trusteeship of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore and the Minister for Education and Skills. The values of the Department of Education and Skills as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of St Aidan’s Comprehensive School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, our school St Aidan’s provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Our school, St Aidan’s Comprehensive, provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school’s mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In St Aidan’s Comprehensive, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

**Mission Statement**

St Aidan’s Comprehensive School is a community based on respect involving the Board of Management, school management, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents/guardians, students and the local community. We endeavour to foster a spirit of co-operation, equality and respect for all.

St Aidan’s Comprehensive School is dedicated to promoting, in co-operation with parents and guardians, the religious, spiritual, moral, academic, aesthetic, cultural, physical, emotional and social development of all the students committed to its care.

The principal means of achieving this aim is through the collaborative participation of students and staff in both curricular and extra-curricular programmes/activities, having regard to each individual’s unique set of needs and aspirations. Students are encouraged to achieve the highest academic standards based on their own individual abilities. While the school understands its responsibility for academic achievement and examination results, it seeks to develop in all its students the skills, attitudes and sensibilities that will enable them to contribute fully to society.

Our school aim is to provide an education, which will prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; promote an active partnership between the school, the home and the community.

**Aims of the School;-**

1. To provide an education that both encourages and challenges our students to achieve the highest academic standards based on their own individual abilities.
2. To encourage all students to develop their full potential, both socially, physically and creatively by participating fully in the life of their school through their involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities
3. To foster in our students the basic values of respect, humanity, tolerance, co-operation and care for others
4. To provide an ordered learning environment which encourages positive behaviour
5. To promote and encourage respect for culture, heritage and language
6. To maintain and value the spirit of co-operation and collaboration among all teaching and ancillary staff that has characterised and is unique to St Aidan’s
7. To provide our students with and education that will help to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
8. To foster good relationships with Parents/Guardians through good communications and involvement in student learning
9. To promote links with the local community through established programmes, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities
10. To provide support to students/ staff through various wellbeing procedures/initiatives (appendix 10)
11. To ensure a happy, healthy and safe environment for all who work in St Aidan’s

## **Admission Statement**

St Aidan’s Comprehensive School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

1. the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
2. the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
3. the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
4. the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
5. the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
6. the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
7. the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
8. the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
9. 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. Aidans Comprehensive School 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 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. Aidans Comprehensive 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.”*

**Schools with special education class(es)**

St Aidan’s Comprehensive school 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 Hearing Impairment as their primary diagnosis specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have as their primary diagnosis a Hearing Impairment**.**

## **Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

St Aidan’s Comprehensive School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills has established a class to provide and education exclusively for students whose primary diagnosis is a Hearing Impairment.

## **Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

1. the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#_Oversubscription_(this_section) below for further details)
2. a parent/guardian 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
3. the student seeking admission will not have attained at least 12 years of age on the 1st day of January of the school year for which he / she wishes to be enrolled or has not completed a full course of primary education or the equivalent as both are required under Section 1 of the Department of Education and Skills Rules and Programmes for Secondary School 2004/05.
4. The special class attached to St Aidan’s Comprehensive School provides and education exclusively for students whose primary diagnosis is a Hearing Impairment and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have as their primary diagnosis the specified category of special education needs provided for in this class.

## **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:

1. Siblings of present students
2. Siblings of past students who sat the Leaving Certificate in St Aidan’s Comprehensive
3. Children of permanent staff of St Aidan’s Comprehensive School
4. Children from our feeder national schools (see Appendix 2 for list of our feeder National Schools)
5. All other applications

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:

**Allocation of Places**

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, then all applications will be decided upon in line with the stated selection criteria.

Any surplus after each criteria is filled goes to the next criteria. Where there are more applicants under any criteria than places available, then a lottery system will be used to first allocate the places and then to create a waiting list.

The order of the waiting list will be determined by the drawing out of names in the presence of the Chairperson/ Acting Chairperson of the BOM / a Parents’ Representative on the BOM and the Principal.

Late Applications where oversubscribed will be placed on the waiting list in order of receipt and below the lottery allocated names.

Please note that twins/triplets will be treated as one unit.

## **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:

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| 1. a student’s prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,   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;   1. the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;   (other than in relation to a fee charging school or a plc or further education and training course run by a school in respect of those courses)   1. a student’s academic ability, skills or aptitude;   (other than in relation to:   * admission to (a) a special school or (b) 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 and/or * admission to an Irish language school, in accordance with the provisions of section 62(9) of the act  1. the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student’s parents; 2. a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;   (other than in the case of admission to the residential element of a boarding school or to a plc or further education and training course run by a school)   1. a student’s connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;   (other than, in the case of siblings of a student attending or having attended the school.   1. 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. |

## **Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St Aidan’s Comprehensive 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 in the school’s official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see [section 15](#_Procedures_for_admission) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 16](#_Declaration_in_relation)  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.

## **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](#_Reviews/appeals) below for further details).

## **Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from St Aidan’s Comprehensive 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.

## **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 Aidan’s Comprehensive School where:-

1. it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
2. 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.
3. the parent/guardian 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
4. an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in [Section 10](#_Acceptance_of_an) above.

## **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 a list of students in relation to whom:

1. An application for admission to a school has been received
2. An offer of admission to a school has been made or
3. An offer of admission to a school has accepted
4. **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 St Aidan’s Comprehensive 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 Aidan’s Comprehensive 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.

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.

## **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.

## **Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

**Enrolment Post First Year**

1. The procedures of St Aidan’s Comprehensive School in relation to admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the schools intake group are as follows.
2. Where the school is not oversubscribed, all students will be offered a place subject to 5 (b)/(c)

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the published selection criteria as set out in Section 6 will apply and a waiting list shall be compiled which shall remain valid for the school year in respect of which the applications are made (see Section 13).

**Admission to the Hearing Impairment Class – Circular Special Education (02/05)**

Students seeking to apply for a place in the Hearing Impaired Unit must satisfy the following criteria:

“Such pupils have a hearing disability that is so serious to impair significantly their capacity to hear and understand human speech, thus preventing them from participating fully in classroom interaction and from benefiting adequately from school instruction.”….(This category is not intended to include pupils with mild hearing loss.)

To gain admission to this class in St Aidan’s, a hearing impairment must be the student’s pre-dominant barrier to accessing the curriculum. The maximum number of places available in this class is six (6).

An Admissions committee comprised of the Visiting teacher for the Deaf, the SEN co-ordinator, the Hearing Impaired Unit co-ordinator, an external Board of Management representative and the Principal shall consider all valid applications. Decisions of the committee will be informed by Circular SP Ed 02/05 and the school admissions policy.

St Aidan’s is an organisation committed to equality of opportunity, working to remove bias, prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

1. **Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees**

The Board of St Aidan’s Comprehensive School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

* an application for admission of a student to the school, or
* the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

## **Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

St Aidan’s Comprehensive School offers religious education in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, religious education supports the ‘multi-denominational’ aspect of our school’s ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between ‘religious education’ and ‘religious instruction’.

* Religious education is open to all students regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
* Religious instruction is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for students of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct form Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

## **Reviews/appeals**

**Review of decisions by the Board of Management**

The parent/guardian 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.