

Introduction.

The enrolment policy of Herbertstown N.S. is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998). The Board of Management trusts that by doing so parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the BOM of Herbertstown NS, Herbertstown, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick and the school principal, Mrs Carmel Heelan will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from this policy.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management of the school.

School Information:

Herbertstown N.S. is a Catholic mixed primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel & Emly. The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils: cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people, and promotes a Catholic philosophy of life.

Herbertstown N.S. has 7 teachers including a teaching principal, 5 mainstream classes, 2 full time SETs and 1 full time SNA. The school caters for pupils from approx age 4 to 12 years in classes from Junior Infants to 6th Class.

The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills and it operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department. The school policy has regard to the resources and funding available. The capacity of the school to implement its desired curriculum, its broad range of educational programmes, its breadth of extra-curricular activities, its school plan and policies are dependent on the resources it receives. Consequently, in determining its activities and programme for any school year the school must have due regard to the teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

School begins at 9.20 and finishes at 3.00pm. Infant classes finish at 2.00 pm.

The door to the school is opened at 9.05 every morning for children to assemble and get organised for the school day. No supervision is provided before this time and the children remain the responsibility of the parents/ guardians.

Rationale.

The policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school

- To make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with the ethos, the mission statement of the school and legislative requirements
- To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in light of the resources available to it
- To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school

Within the context and parameters of Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act (1998) and the funding and resources available, the enrolment policy of Herbertstown N.S. supports the principles of:

- ✓ *Inclusiveness* – particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need
- ✓ *Equality* – of access and participation in the school
- ✓ *Parental choice* – in relation to enrolment
- ✓ *Respect for diversity* – values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Therefore, no child will be refused access to Herbertstown N.S. for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, accent, language, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status, religious or political beliefs or values, family or social circumstances.

Legal Framework.

Section 9 (j) of the Education Act 1998 specifies that 'A recognized school shall... subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school'.

Section 15 (2) (d) states that the Board of Management shall 'publish... the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice, are respected.'

Goals.

The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

- To inform parents about the school, it's programmes, activities and procedures
- To enable applications for admission to the school to be handled in an open, transparent manner
- To put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered
- To ensure that these criteria are informed by our ethos, our mission statement and current legislation
- To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application

Roles and responsibilities in developing and implementing this policy.

The BOM:

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementations and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate
- To decide on appeals by parents or students with respect to any decisions made by the Principal/BOM

The Principal:

- To formulate draft policy in consultation with the teaching staff, students, parents and the Patron
- To monitor its implementation and to ensure that it is reviewed by the review date
- To implement the policy and to support other teaching staff in their implementation of the policy
- To apply for and acquire such resources as are available in accordance with government policies
- To ensure, within the constraints of available resources, that alternative programmes are devised where necessary and practicable to meet the needs of students
- To appraise the policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate
- To ensure a register of all students attending the school is established and maintained
- To ensure that a record of attendance or non-attendance is maintained for each student registered at this school and, in the case of non-attendance, the reason for same.
- Prior to registering a child, to provide the parents of an applicant with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and ensure that the parent confirm in writing their acceptance of the Code and an assurance that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code by the child.
- To provide, on request, to any parent of a child registered in the school with a copy of the Code of Behaviour
- Where a child is refused admission, to advise the parents of their right of appeal to the Trustees and the Department of Education setting out the Title and Address of each and advising of time limits.

Teaching Staff:

- To co-operate with the implementation of this policy
- To take the needs of all students into account in the way in which they select textbooks, plan and teach their lessons and conduct assessments
- To bring concerns about SEN, curricular matters and information to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal, SEN teacher.
- To keep parents informed through the regular Parent/Teacher Meetings and school reports and by meeting parents from time to time as required.
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Students:

- To co-operate fully with the school in the implementations of the policy
- To offer suggestions for improving the service to students with SEN

Parents:

- To support the policy and to co-operate fully with the school in its implementation
- To bring to the attention of the school authorities any concern they may have in relation to the school's provision for the educational needs of their child
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Policy Considerations.

- The BOM of Herbertstown N.S. reserves the right of admission if such admissions contravene Department guidelines on class size etc. The BOM respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. Consequently, the BOM reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each class, bearing in mind:
 - Health and Safety concerns regarding staff and children
 - Available classroom space
 - Multi-grade classes
 - Educational needs of the children
 - Presence of children with special needs
- The school will maintain a list of refused applicants for each class, their place on that list having been determined under the criteria outlined.
- Department of Education & Skills class size directives
- Appropriate supports and resources available
- Time of school year

Application Procedures.

Application forms are available from the school secretary. The BOM has determined that the school principal will accept applications for enrolment in Junior Infants in the 2nd term of the school year prior to enrolment. At the beginning of the second term the school principal will communicate generally to the school community through Parish newsletters, the Limerick Leader and any other appropriate mechanism that applications are currently being accepted.

The registration process is initiated on receipt by the school of a completed application form, signed and dated by one or both parents/guardians. Telephone calls or personal visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.

Applications will only be accepted on the basis of a fully completed Application Form.

Date of application, child's DOB, address and telephone contact number are recorded in the School Record of Applications. A letter of acknowledgement together with a copy of this policy is sent to the applicant. The acknowledgement of an application merely confirms that it will be assessed under the criteria outlined, and does not confer any further status on that application.

Entry in the School Record of Application means that an application will be considered in the second term of the relevant enrolment year, and will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria outlined in this policy.

Following this evaluation, the Principal will make a recommendation to the BOM, listing proposed enrolments for the forthcoming year. Once an enrolment list is approved by the BOM, all applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome, and if refused admission will be notified of their entitlement to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Parents/guardians will be asked to complete an enrolment form. A copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and permission slips will be attached which parents/guardians are requested to read and sign to indicate their compliance and wishes.

The enrolment form must be accompanied by a copy of the child's birth certificate and Baptismal Cert where appropriate.

Enrolment forms are designed in line with POD requirements to populate the database with the required information eg. PPS no etc.. A note informing parents of this is included on the form.

Admission of Junior Infants normally takes place on the first day of the academic year. Any child who has not reached his/her fourth birthday cannot be enrolled at any time.

Pupils may transfer to the school during the school year subject to school policy, available space, the provisions of the Education Welfare Act (2000) and in some cases the approval of the Department of Education and Skills.

Decision Making.

Parents/guardians will be notified of the decision of the BOM within 21 days of its meeting at which enrolment decisions are made.

Criteria.

The BOM makes decisions relating to enrolment in accordance with school policy. In the event that applications exceed/is expected to exceed the number of spaces available the BOM has determined that priority in the allocation of places will be given to the following groups of children:

1. Siblings of children already enrolled in the school
2. Catholic children of the parish
3. Non-catholic children who live within the parish
4. Catholic children who live outside the parish who do not have a Catholic school in their parish
5. Catholic children who live outside the parish who have a catholic school in their parish
6. Non-Catholic children who are not residents of the parish with priority given to children whose home address is closest the school (as measured by a straight line on an O.S. map)

In the application of these criteria the BOM reserves the right to make exceptions to provide for the enrolment of children of staff members, children of ethnic minorities, traveller children, children of refugee/asylum seekers etc.

Places will be allocated thereafter according to the priorities above and confirmed by the BOM at its next meeting. If necessary the additional criteria of the age of pupils may be taken into account and priority given to older children. In the event of a child not obtaining a place on the grounds of age, priority will be given in the subsequent year.

All children enrolled are expected to comply with and support the school's Code of Behaviour, as well as the school's designated policies on curriculum, organisation and management.

Monitoring Procedures.

The implementations of this policy will be monitored by the BOM at the appropriate time. It will also be referred by the Principal for consideration by the full staff at the same time.

The Principal will report to the BOM regarding the process at the beginning of the second term each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete.

Where the Principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated to him by the BOM in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the BOM at the earliest opportunity.

This policy will be reviewed regularly in light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and the BOM every 5 years.

Appeals Procedure.

Parents/guardians who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision may appeal to the BOM, it must be addressed, in writing, to the chairperson of the BOM, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within 10 days of receiving the refusal.

Parents/guardians, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education & Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged with 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol.

Enrolment of pupils with SEN.

The BOM may request a copy of any relevant medical or psychological reports that are available. If such a report is not available it is open to the BOM to request that the child be assessed prior to enrolment. The purpose of this assessment is to establish the educational needs of the child relevant to his/her disability/special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of such a report the BOM shall assess how Herbertstown N.S. can meet the needs specified in the report. If further resources are required the BOM will, prior to enrolment, request the Department of Education & Skills to provide the required resources eg. Visiting teacher service, resource teacher, SNA, specialised equipment/furniture, transport etc.

The school principal will meet with the parents/guardians of the child to discuss the child's needs and the suitability and capability of Herbertstown N.S. to meet those needs.

If necessary, a full case conference may be called which may include parents/guardians, principal, class teacher, learning support personnel, educational psychologist.

Refusal to enrol on grounds of 'Exceptional Circumstances.'

The BOM reserve the right to refuse enrolment in exceptional circumstances eg

- a) The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education
- b) In the opinion of the BOM, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.