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**St. Michael’s Special National School**

HOLY ANGELS

GLENMAROON

CHAPELIZOD

DUBLIN 20.

**Telephone: 018201859**

**ENROLMENT/ADMISSIONS POLICY**

**Introductory Statement**

The Board of Management of St. Michael’s Special National School hereby sets out its Enrolment and Admission Policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Board trusts that by doing so, parents/guardians and/or referring agencies will be assisted in relation to enrolment/admissions matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the School Principal will clarify any matters that may arise from this policy.

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

**Rationale**

This policy aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable

St. Michael’s School to:

* Make decisions on all applicants in an open and transparent manner consistent with the Ethos and Mission Statement of the school and Patron Body and legislative requirements.
* Make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of the applicants in the light of resources available to it.
* Put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between pupils, parents/guardians and teachers where a pupil is admitted to the school
* Provide clear guidelines on the procedures and requirements for enrolment .

**General School Information**

St. Michael’s School is a co-educational school which is designated to cater for pupils, aged 5\* – 18 years, who, on psychological testing, are found to be functioning within the level of mild general learning disability (i.e. full scale I.Q. between 50 to 69). We also cater for pupils with a Borderline Mild General Learning Disability (full I.Q. scale between 70 to 79) who in addition have other significant need e.g. severe language impairment. Appendix II of DES Circular 8/99 and Appendix II of DES Circular Special Education 08/02 lay out such criteria as determined by an educational or clinical psychologist. The pupil/ teacher ratio for such pupils is 11 to 1. It is not a school that caters for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Referrals are considered on an individual basis giving due regard to both the characteristic designation of the school and the provision of adequate resources by the Department of Education & Skills (DES) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). Applications for enrolment should be directed to the School Principal, acting on behalf of the Board of Management.

\*pupils will be aged 5 years of age on or before 1st January of the year in which they are applying.

*St. Michael’s School is a welcoming and inclusive community under the* ***Patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin and Trusteeship of the Daughters of Charity.***

***As a Catholic school****, inspired by the vision of Louise de Marillac and the philosophy of Vincent de Paul, in partnership with parents, staff and the Archdiocese of Dublin, we seek to create a community based on Gospel values which are enshrined in all school policies and practices.* ***School Ethos***

*We provide a secure, healthy and caring environment which values the uniqueness of each person.*

*As a team:-*

* *We recognise the needs and talents of each pupil and provide an appropriate broad curriculum.*
* *We foster self-esteem, empowering each pupil to reach his/her full potential.*
* *We believe in an active partnership between home and school.*

*It is our wish that pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life-skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and lives that will contribute to the betterment of society.* ***Mission Statement***

**School Governance and Staffing**

The school is governed by the Board of Management. At present, the staff comprises 1 Principal, 21 Teachers, 1 Home Economics Teacher, 1 Woodwork Teacher, 1 part time P.E. teacher, 22 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), 5 ancillary staff and 19 bus escorts. The school is under the administration of the Primary / Special Education Sections of the DES and adheres to the *Rules for National Schools* and the relevant Circulars issued by the DES.

**Curriculum**

In conformity with its Mission Statement, the School recognises the needs and talents of each pupil, and wishes to provide a broad curriculum for all pupils. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the DES, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). The curriculum for pupils with mild general learning disabilities (Guidelines for teachers of Students with Mild General Learning Disabilities (primary and post-primary) is the bedrock of all that is taught, along with the Primary School’s Curriculum. The school also provides recognised post-primary programmes including the Junior Cycle programmes, level 2, level 3 subjects (Art, Craft and Design and Home Economics), as well as modules from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 3 (Woodwork, Food and Nutrition, Ceramics, Music Appreciation, Application of Number, Computers, Horticulture/Container Gadening, Health & Fitness, Art Appreciation and Communications).

Within the limits of the resources available, the School endeavours to empower each pupil to reach her/his full potential by working in an active partnership comprised of parents, teachers, Ancillary Staff, the Admissions Team, DES and Health Service Executive (HSE).

**Funding**

The school is financed directly by way of capitation and other grants provided by the DES. School policy has regard to the resources and funding available. The teaching and SNA staffing is determined by the DES through the NCSE.

**Length of School Day/School Calendar**

As special schools are under the primary section of the Department, the lengths of the school day and the school year are in accordance with primary school regulations. All pupils attend school from 9.20 a.m. to 3.00 pm to facilitates transport to and from school. In the interests of some pupils it may be necessary to shorten the day further if parents or school staff feel that the pupil would benefit from a shorter school day.

**Shared Placements - Special School / Mainstream School**

Current enrolment regulations in Ireland do not facilitate dual enrolment. There are no policies / procedures in place to deal with capitation grants, school insurance or school training. Primary Circular 24/02 states that for staffing and capitation purposes, a Pupil can only be included in the enrolment of one school in any year. St. Michael’s School is guided by Circular 24/02.

**Child Protection & Safeguarding**

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of St. Michael’s School has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department’s Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Dr. Sharon Gorevan

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Ms. Margaret O’Riordan

**Code of Behaviour/School Policies**

Pupils enrolled in St. Michael’s School are required to co-operate with the school’s Code of Behaviour and other policies on Curriculum, Organisation and Management. These policies are available from the School Office. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children co-operate with these policies in an age appropriate manner.

The School’s Code of Behaviour is given to parents/guardians of new pupils prior to enrolment. Parents/guardians are required to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

***Please note that the Board has a duty of care to all its existing pupils and staff may not be in a position to facilitate pupils who could compromise the entitlement to safety and education of other pupils or to the safety of staff.***

**Health**

Children who require regular medicines or specific medical procedures of any sort are requested to provide the school with signed parental/guardian consent stating the times and circumstances of when the medicine should be administered. An up to date medical report may be requested so that the school can assess its ability to cater for the pupil’s medical needs. Should a pupil already enrolled require new medicines/medical procedures, the school, in consultation with parents/guardians, will reassess its ability to meet the pupil’s needs. A copy of the school’s Administration of Medication Policy will be given to parents/guardians of pupils with medical needs and is available upon request to all parents/guardians.

**Legislative Framework**

Within the context and parameters of DES regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act (1998), and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of :

* Inclusive access to an appropriate curriculum for all pupils
* Equality of access and participation in all areas of school life
* Parental choice in relation to enrolment, provide that the pupil’s primary disability is a Mild or Borderline Mild General Learning Disability and
* Respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

**Aims**

The aims of this policy are to:

* Ensure efficient management of the school.
* Fulfil the requirements of the Education Act, 1998, the Educational Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act, 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and all relevant equality legislation.
* Clarify the enrolment/admissions procedures.
* Maintain and promote the ethos of St. Michael’s School.
* Provide parental choice.

**Referrals**

St. Michael's School accepts referrals from:

1. Parents/Guardians.
2. Other relevant agencies, as may be applicable, with parental consent.

The Board of Management requests parents/ guardians and /or referring agencies to inform the School if application has been made for placement in another school.

Parents/guardians, in conjunction with the Referring Assessment Agency and the school’s Admissions Team, should take account of their child's abilities and aptitudes, and consider the range of possible school placement options available, before deciding on the school placement which would be most appropriate and beneficial to their child. The recommendation by a psychologist should be for a school designated for pupils with a Mild General Learning Disability as identified by their Full Scale IQ.

When considering St. Michael's School as an option, parents/guardians must:

* Be willing to allow their child to meet with the School Principal / Deputy Principal and/or relevant members of staff,
* Visit the School prior to their child's admission,
* Show a willingness to accept special school placement,
* Give permission, where appropriate, to the School Principal or delegate to visit the school presently attended by the child,
* Give permission, where appropriate to contact/meet with any relevant Multidisciplinary Team members that may be associated with their child,
* Allow and accept appropriate placement by the School Principal within the class setting.

**Enrolment Criteria**

The selection of pupils for enrolment is a matter for decision by the Board of Management.

The Board of Management delegates to its Admission Team the power to apply this policy in a fair and transparent manner when applications for places are sought in the school. The Board has determined that the Admissions Team shall consist of three teachers who are permanently employed in the school, including the Principal, Deputy Principal and one other teacher.

An Admissions Team assess each application for enrolment. Generally, recommendations are made to the Board of Management giving consideration to the following criteria:

* Pupils of school-going age who, on psychological testing, are found to be functioning within the level of mild general learning disability. Full Scale IQ and Standard Scores must be provided.
* Pupils who, on psychological testing, are found to be of mild/borderline ability and who, in addition, have other significant needs, e.g. language delay, speech impairment. All original reports of diagnosis to be provided at the time of application.
* Pupils with a mild general learning disability and an associated difficulty, e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder. All original reports of diagnosis to be provided at the time of application.
* Pupils of all religious denominations within the level of mild general learning disability.
* In order for transport to be sanctioned, the pupil, on psychological testing, must have a definite diagnosis of mild general learning disability based on their Full Scale IQ and a specific recommendation for a special school placement.
* In the event of Special Needs Assistant support being required, a specific recommendation for Special Needs Assistant support within a special school setting must be made in the psychological assessment.
* In the event of Bus Escort support being required, a specific recommendation for Bus Escort support whilst on school transport services must be made in the psychological assessment.
* Broadly speaking, pupils attending St. Michael's School come from the catchment area which should be the nearest school to their address for pupils with a mild general learning disability and is basically defined by provision of transport sanctioned by the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), the Department of Education & Skills and organised by School Transport Services, Bus Eireann.
* Availability of a place in an age appropriate class.
* Pupils whom the Admission’s Team otherwise recommend for admission for stated reasons.

The Board of Management of St. Michael’s School will consider applications for places for pupils with disabilities such as physical or sensory disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, any other recognised disorder that can co-occur with a primary disability of Mild or Borderline General Learning Disability. It is not a school that caters for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The closing date for referrals for September enrolment is January 10th of that year. Applications will be accepted from September 1st of the previous year.

Late applicants will not be processed/considered unless places become available when all timely applications have been processed. Parents/guardians are welcome to re-apply for the following year in September.

When recognising the rights of the parents/guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St. Michael’s School has also a responsibility to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular to pupils already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by principles of natural justice and the best interests of the pupils.

Having accepted a pupil based on the criteria in this policy, the Board of Management reserves the right to advise and direct parents/guardians of a pupil to apply to a more appropriate educational setting should subsequent formal testing determine the pupil’s disability to lie outside the designated I.Q. range.

**Application Procedure**

The parent/guardian/referring agency must apply in writing to the school, furnishing the following documentation to the School Principal and satisfying the above criteria:

* Recent Psychological Assessment containing a definite diagnosis of Mild General Learning Disability indicated with FSIQ standard scores (within two years of the enrolment date),
* A recommendation within this report for a school for pupils with a Mild General Learning Disability,
* Copies of any other reports containing original additional diagnosis, e.g. ASD, ADHD etc.,
* Social History (where appropriate),
* Medical Report (where applicable),
* Psychiatric Assessment (where appropriate),
* Speech and Language Therapy Report (where applicable),
* Previous School Reports/Individual Education Plans,
* Any other relevant information.

An application will not be deemed completed until all documentation has been received. An appointment to visit the school will be made on receipt of all relevant documentation. Parents/Guardians of applicants who do not meet the criteria as set out in this policy will be notified in writing.

Upon receipt of documentation indicating that the child meets the criteria for enrolment, groups of parents/guardians are invited in to a general information meeting with the Admissions Team. If any other person is attending this meeting with parents/guardians, the school must be informed in advance. At this meeting information about St. Michael’s School, the Curriculum, Ethos, etc. will be shared and small groups of parents/guardians will be escorted on a brief tour of the school.

If parents/guardians wish to proceed with the application for enrolment, this must be expressed in writing to the Principal. An arrangement will then be made for the Admissions Team to meet with the parent/guardian and child with a view to possible enrolment. If any other person wishes to attend this meeting with parents/guardians, the school must be informed in advance and, where considered appropriate, this will be accommodated. A record of all meetings and decisions of the Admissions Team will be kept.

Prior to actual admission the following certificates are required:

* Birth Certificate,
* Baptismal Certificate (if applicable).

**Decision Making Process**

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management, on the advice of the Admissions Team and in accordance with school policy.

On receipt of applications, all applications are date stamped and documentation is assessed based on criteria as outlined above by the Admissions Team.

Parents/Guardians of applicants who are not successful in securing a place for their child will be notified in writing of the reason enrolment has been refused and of their right to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (see *Right to Appeal* on page 9).

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment in the following exceptional circumstances:

* The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education
* In the opinion of the Board of Management, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.

Successful applicants will be offered a place in the school. The Board, through the Principal, will notify parents in writing of their decision within 21 days. Parents will be furnished with school enrolment forms to complete and forms for the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) regarding school enrolment in a special school, school transport and additional resources that may be deemed necessary including access to SNA. These forms and other relevant documentation (birth/baptismal certificates and passport size photograph) must be returned to the school within one week. The decision to accept a new pupil is then forwarded to the SENO along with copies of all relevant reports upon which the decision was made and the completed forms in relation to special school placement, school transport and additional resources. This offer is subject to approval from the Department of Education, the National Council for Special Education and Bus Eireann.

Places cannot be ‘held’ or deferred from year to year. If a place is offered and refused or no response is received within the specified timeframe on the letter of offer, the offer is invalidated and a new application must be made for future placement. If admission does not take place within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the new school year, the pupil’s place will cease to be valid for that academic year.

**Applications exceeds vacancies**

In the event that applications for enrolment exceed/are expected to exceed the number of places available the following decision making process will apply. The Board will exercise its discretion in the application of the following criteria.

The criteria may include any of the following though not necessarily in that order:

* Availability of places at the age of the applicant
* Siblings of current/past pupils
* Availability of suitable additional supports and staffing to cater for additional needs that a pupil may have
* Date of application (first come, first served, commencing from September of the year that applications are being processed)
* Catchment area
* Children of staff members
* Any specific provision for children of ethnic minorities, including travellers, refugees, asylum seekers etc
* Ethos considerations
* Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances.

If the number of applicants for enrolment has exceeded the school places available, the names of those applicants who meet the criteria set out in this policy and who have not secured a place, will be kept on file for consideration until June should a suitable vacancy become available in the same academic year.

Parents/Guardians of such applicants will be informed in writing of the reason enrolment has been refused (no available place) and of their right to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007).

Parents can re apply requesting a place for the new academic year, re-commencing the application process.

**Right of Appeal**

Parents/guardians who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision may appeal to the Board of Management. It must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents have the right to appeal decisions by the Board of Management in relation to enrolment or exclusion to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills on the official form provided by the Department. The appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol.

Circular 22/02 sets out the *Appeal Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.*

**Pupil Transfer**

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to the Admissions Policy and availability of spaces.

**Re-enrolment**

"A child removed from the rolls in accordance with the terms of Rule 64 of the 'Rules for National Schools', shall at any time after she/he was so removed and at the request of her/his parents or guardian, be re-enrolled in the school, not withstanding any

alteration to the enrolment policy in the school which may have been formulated during the period when the child was not on the rolls, and subject only to there being a place available in the school." (Circular 4/97)

**Suspension & Expulsion**

The Board of Management is required by law to maintain a level of safety throughout the school and on all school activities consistent with the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 and discharges this duty through its employees, the Principal and staff.

Pupils enrolled in St. Michael's School are obliged to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour. In accordance with the Department of Education & Skills 'Rules for National Schools' (130), the obligations on St. Michael's School Board under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005) and the guidelines as laid down by the National Educational Welfare Board, it may be necessary to temporarily or permanently exclude a pupil from the school. The procedure necessary for suspension or for expulsion is set out in Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act

2000 and the NEWB, Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools. The steps for suspension and/or expulsion will be followed as set out in these guidelines.

Suspension will be availed of either after all minor sanctions have been exhausted or as a response to a single breach of school discipline where any lesser sanction would be inappropriate in the circumstances.

The Board of Management empowers the Principal to impose a suspension. A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. If a suspension of longer than three

days is imposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and expected outcomes.

However, the Board of Management authorises the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened sooner. The Board of Management places a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

Under the provisions of Section 24 (4)(a) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 where a pupil is suspended for a period of six or more days, the Principal shall inform the Educational Welfare Officer immediately by notice in writing.

The parent/guardian must accompany the pupil to the school for a meeting with the relevant staff prior to his/her return to school. Where the total number of days for

