

# TULLOW COMMUNITY SCHOOL



## *Admissions Policy*

<b>School Address:</b>	<b>Tullow Community School, The Mullawn, Tullow, Co. Carlow</b>
<b>Roll number:</b>	<b>91356F</b>
<b>School Patron/s:</b>	<b>Patrician Brothers, Carlow/Kilkenny ETB</b>

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## **1.Introduction**

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the Board of Management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 14<sup>th</sup> of 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 Tullow Community 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**

Tullow School Community school is a co-educational, multi-denominational school under the joint patronage of the Patrician Brothers (Le Cheile Schools Trust) and the Chief Executive of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board.

Community schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to the delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Community 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 for Community Schools and opened on 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1978 following the amalgamation of Tullow Vocational School, Brigidine Convent and Patrician Brothers' School. The values of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board as a multi-denominational state body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Patrician Brothers and the Brigidine Sisters are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Tullow Community 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 provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Our school 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 our school 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.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Tullow Community School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patrons for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Tullow Community School was established in 1978 and serves the educational needs of the community of Tullow and surrounding areas. More specifically this school normally caters for students from the following national schools:

**Ardattin NS, Ballon NS, Ballyconnell NS, Clonegal NS, Grange NS, Nurney NS, Rathmore NS, Rathoe NS, Rathvilly NS, Scoil Mhuire NS, Scoil Padraig Tullow, St. Columbas Tullow.**

***Tullow Community School provides an educational setting in which its mission is to nurture the wellbeing of all so that they may grow in knowledge, conscience and compassion.***

Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources. Where the resources cannot be secured, the school may refuse admission.

### **Resources**

Tullow Community School is funded by the Department of Education & Skills and is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil-teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department from time to time.

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.

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 enrolment, activities and programmes 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. This is established by the overall size of the school sanctioned by the D.E.S. and the Admissions Policy of the Board of Management.

Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources. Where the resources cannot be secured, the school may refuse admission.

### **Management:**

**The Board of Management**, consisting of three nominees of the Patrician Brothers, three nominees of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, two parent nominees and two teacher nominees, is responsible for the running of the school in accordance with the Deeds of Trust and section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998. The Principal is Secretary to the Board and is a non-voting member.

### **School Organisation:**

- **The Parents' Association** consists of elected representatives of parents of students in the school. The Association provides a valuable source of communication, is involved in policy formulation and has contributed greatly to the development of facilities in the school.
- **Parent/Teacher Meetings** are held, and parents are notified of same. Parents are invited to make appointments with tutor or teachers as the need arises.
- Tullow Community School, through its prefect system, has had a **student representative body** since 1978. It now has a prefect group, a Meitheal (Buddy) team and a Students' Council who operate in accordance with Section 27 of the Education Act 1998.

- **The working day** (Monday-Thursday) extends from 8.50 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. with a short break at 11.00 a.m. to 11.15 a.m. Lunch break is from 1.15 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Friday extends from 8.50 a.m. to 1.15 p.m. with one short break at 11.00 a.m. to 11.15 a.m. Students are not permitted to leave school grounds during break times without permission being sought by their parents and granted by the school. 1<sup>st</sup> Year students will not be permitted to leave school during break times for that academic year until such time as the Principal allows.
- A **school calendar** is produced and circulated to parents at the commencement of each academic year.
- **Dress Code** - Students are required to wear the school uniform, details of which are available from the school office.

### 3. Admission Statement

Tullow Community 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.

The ethos of the school is multi denominational with a Christian perspective whilst maintaining a deep respect for the diversity of traditions, values and beliefs found in the wider community.

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

Tullow Community 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 category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs.

Tullow Community School will provide education for students with additional needs through an established Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) centre. The unit within Tullow Community School will accept students in liaison with the advice of the NCSE (National Council for Special Education). The terms and protocols outlined in this document should be read in conjunction with the Admission Policy for the ASD (Naomh Brid/Room 60) unit which is available from the school on request and on our website.

The Board will prioritise applications initially as follows:

- That there is available space. (A maximum of 6 places in a base group)
- The needs of the student as identified can be met within the Special Unit.
- Where there are more applicants than places, students attending the primary schools identified in this policy as feeder schools to Tullow Community School will have priority.

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

### **In the case of a mainstream school with a SEN class attached:**

Tullow Community School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a unit attached to the mainstream school to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum disorders. All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-IV or DSM-V or ICD-10. All applications must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by an Educational/Clinical Psychologist approved by the DES, recommending the applicant as suitable.

A prospective student for the ASD Unit must have a professional recommendation, from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multi-disciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism specific class in an ASD Unit. All applications in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team/Board of Management.

## 5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a. the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 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

The special class attached to Tullow Community School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

## 6. Oversubscription

### Entry Requirements

***Enrolment is open to all students who satisfy the following criteria:***

1. Age: The applicant must have reached the age of 12 years by the 1<sup>st</sup> January of the year preceding entry into Tullow Community School. (A Birth Cert must be presented).
2. Primary education must be completed.
3. A signed acceptance of our school's "Code of Behaviour."
4. All students undertake to follow the prescribed curriculum. Science is a compulsory subject for all junior level classes. For health and safety reasons – science class groups will not exceed twenty-four (24) students. The maximum number of students in any one junior year will be determined by the number of science classes of 24 in that year.

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:**

Offers of places in Tullow Community School will be made to applicants in the following categories, in descending order of priority until the enrolment quota is reached.



When all places in the school are filled, no further places will be offered to applicants in other categories.

**Category 1**

Children who are living in the catchment area and who have a brother or sister currently (on the date of receipt of the application) attending Tullow Community School.

**Category 2**

All other children who are living in the catchment area.

**Category 3**

Children, who do not live in the catchment area, but who have a brother or sister (on the date of the receipt of the application) attending Tullow Community School.

**Category 4**

Children, who do not live in the catchment area, but who are attending a primary school in the catchment area.

**Category 5**

Children not covered by any of the categories above.

In general, to be deemed to be “living within the catchment area”, the child should be permanently resident within the catchment area on the final date for receipt of applications for the relevant year of entry to 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:

- A lottery will apply to all other available places,
- Proof of residence in the catchment area will need to be provided.

## **7. What will not be considered or taken into account**

The school Admissions Policy will comply with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act and hence 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; the payment of fees or contributions, a student’s academic ability, skills or aptitude, or that the student must present for interview or any other meeting in advance of his/her admission. Applications are required to be submitted during the period specified for receiving applications as set out in the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Tullow Community 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 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school Admission Policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

## **9. Notifying applicants of decisions**

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a 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 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Tullow Community 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.

## **11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn**

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Tullow Community 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 10 above.

## **12. Sharing of Data with other schools**

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

## **13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription**

In the event of there being more applications to the school than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Tullow Community 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 only.

Placement on the waiting list of Tullow Community 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.

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.

## **14. Late Applications**

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to Schools Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

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

It is the policy of Tullow Community School that students transferring from other schools will only be admitted in the following term after the application is accepted. Tullow Community School does not accept transfers from other schools into 3rd Year unless in exceptional cases due to issues around the effective transfer of assessment materials. (Junior Cycle Year) .

Tullow Community School does not accept transfers of students whose parents reside in the catchment area and who have enrolled such students in other schools except in the most exceptional circumstances. Such transfers are accepted subject to the following:

- Space being available in the class group.
- Space being available in the subject option sought and at the level sought by the applicant. Please note that the maximum number in Science is 24 students, Home Economics is 20 students.
- All relevant information sought meets the criteria as set out below (how to apply).
- Consultation with the Education Welfare Officer and Special Educational Needs Officer.

### **a. How to Apply:**

In the first instance, parents should apply in writing. Such letters will be kept on file until transfer requests from other schools are being processed (usually from the 20<sup>th</sup> of August each year).

If having satisfied the curricular requirement of our own students, places remain in the class group and subject level, students who have requested to be considered for places will be invited to complete an Application Form. Applicants should complete the application form, giving all of the details required. Parents/Guardians should sign the application form and date it. Parents/Guardians are required to provide an emergency contact phone number. Incomplete forms will be returned to parents. Parents must give consent to the Principal of TCS to acquire relevant information from the applicant's previous school/s.

Applicants are required to submit a reference and transfer request form from their previous school(s). Failure to complete any of the necessary documentation listed above or to supply any other relevant documentation requested by the school may result in an applicant being refused admission to the school. In addition, information will be required from the student's former/ present school concerning attendance, educational progress, reports, special needs, reasons for transfer, psychological reports (if appropriate). Where appropriate, applicants may be required to submit copies of the results of state examinations. Where an applicant has attended more than one second-level school he/she may be required, at the discretion of the Board, to submit reports from each school.

The behaviour record of a student in their previous school shall be an important factor. The school reserves the right to refuse to admit a student whose behaviour in his/her previous school has been unsatisfactory or where there has not been a satisfactory level of co-operation between the previous school and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). The attendance record of a student in his/her previous school shall also be an important factor. The Board of Management reserves the right to draw up a contract with specific conditions for individual students who transfer to Tullow Community School. At an appropriate time each year the school will take steps to determine what are the intentions of its own students for the following year. Students in all years may be required to complete a re-application form indicating their intentions.

When this process is complete, the school will determine whether and how many places, may be available to students from outside the school. Priority will be given to Tullow Community School students that are permitted by the school, in accordance with Department of Education regulations, to repeat a school year.

Remaining places will be allocated as follows:

1. Students whose parents have moved into the catchment area. Such application will be considered with reference to the date of the application letter.
2. Students who reside outside the catchment area and who fulfil the conditions above.

The process of allocating such places will commence on or around 20<sup>th</sup> August each year.

#### **b. Admission To Specific Programme/Subject or Levels:**

It should be noted that there is a specific admissions policy for Transition Year which is available from the school office. There is also an inter class policy which is also available from the school office.

From time to time it may arise that the demand for a particular subject or at a specific level for any subject results in the school not being able to facilitate a request to change to a specific class.

It may also arise that those seeking a place in a particular programme may exceed the number of places normally available on that programme.

The school will make every effort, within the constraints of the accommodation, teaching resources and equipment, to accommodate all such students. Where all students cannot be accommodated the following shall apply:

- Priority will be given to students from within the school,
- Priority will be given to students who return fully completed Application Forms by the dates specified by the school.

Where it is not possible to accommodate all applicants:

- Entry to specific subject levels will be determined by the student's previous performance at that subject relative to the other applicants. Their results in house and state examination where available will also be considered. This allocation of subjects levels will be reviewed from time to time when class tests are completed and when full assessment tests are concluded and compiled.

- Entry to specific subjects will be determined by reference to the preferences indicated by students on their option/application form and by reference to the student's previous performance at that subject relative to the other applicants. Their results in state examinations where available will also be considered.

Where this does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the school may survey the students' previous teacher(s) about their suitability for the subject or alternative subjects and the school may also take into account the availability of other suitable subjects available to competing applicants.

**c. Admission to Repeat a Year:**

All such applications are subject to the relevant Department of Education & Skills guidelines. Applications to repeat a year will be considered in the light of D.E.S. Circulars & Guidelines. Department of Education Circular M2/95 will be utilised as the guiding reference point for all applications to repeat a year in school. Applications will also be considered in the light of places available on the relevant programme, subject to class size limitations. Applications must be in writing and must be accompanied by supporting documentation as appropriate. The school must be satisfied that the applicant, in light of the special circumstances that gave rise to the application, applies him/herself to study to the best of his/her ability. The discipline record of the student shall be a determining factor.

Applications to repeat a year may be referred to the National Education Welfare Board for direction.

**d. Admission to Repeat Leaving Certificate Programme:**

The school does not operate a Repeat Leaving Certificate Programme. It does not normally provide any additional teaching to cover material normally covered in 6th Year. Students who apply to repeat the Leaving Certificate at the school will be considered:

- In the light of places available in the relevant subjects and at the level required, the overall programme and overall enrolment within the school.
- In the light of the student's previous academic record, application to studies, attendance, discipline etc.

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

The Board of Management of Tullow Community 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.

## 17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

It is important to understand that our school does not provide *religious instruction* and therefore the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise in this school. There is an important distinction between *religious instruction* and *religious education*.

*Religious instruction* is a term used in Ireland to indicate instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

*Religious education* is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.

As Tullow Community School is a multi-denominational school, it supports the provision of *religious education* that caters for all students regardless of their religious or non-religious beliefs.

## 18. Reviews/Appeals

### Review Process 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 themselves, may request the Board in writing 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.

## 19. Conclusion

The Board of Management of Tullow Community School, in devising this “Admissions Policy”, is determined to ensure that the school serves students of both genders and of all abilities in a healthy, safe, positive, challenging and rewarding learning environment. The Board would like to emphasise to parents/guardians the necessity for the school and the home to work together, and in partnership, to develop fully the range of talents, abilities and personalities of its students, so that they can, both individually and collectively, contribute confidently and productively to the local and global communities.

## 20. Approval of the policy by the Board of Management

Policy approved by Board of Management

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2020

Signed by Chairperson on behalf of the Board of Management

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_*Imelda Keogh*\_\_\_\_\_

Amended by Board of Management on Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Admissions Policy Last Review Dates: *September 2020***

<b>Proposed By:</b>	Tim Healy
<b>Seconded By:</b>	Helen Tooher
<b>Signature of Chairperson:</b>	Imelda Keogh
<b>Date:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> of September 2020