



*Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford*

# **POLICY FOR ADMISSION TO SCHOOL YEAR 2021/2022**

## **St Declan's Community College**

A decision on an application for admission will be based on the implementation of this Policy, the information set out in the annual admission notice of the school and the information provided by the Applicant in the application for admission, once received before the closing date set out in the annual admission notice.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **PART A – *General Information for All Applicants***

1. Glossary of terms
2. Admission Statement
3. Legal Framework
4. General Admission Provisions

## **PART B - *Information for Specific Categories of Applicants***

5. Application to the First-Year Group
6. Application to All Year Groups Other Than First-Year
7. Application to the Special Class

# PART A - General Information for All Applicants

## 1 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**'Applicant'** means the parent / guardian of a Student, or, in the case of a Student who has reached the age of 18 years, the Student, who has made an application for admission to St Declan's Community College.

**'Student'** means the person in respect of whom the application is being made. All uses of the word throughout this Policy therefore imply 'prospective' as part of the interpretation. That is, the use of the word 'Student' does not mean that the application for him/her has been accepted such that s/he is regarded as a Student of St Declan's Community College by virtue of application alone.

**'Gender'**, in line with the definition of "*the gender ground*" in the Equal Status Act 2000, is such that "*one is male and the other is female*". This does not prejudice any Student who is Intersex or identifies as Androgynous/Androgyne, Bigender, Demigender, Gender Fluid, Genderqueer, Multigender, Neutrois, Non-binary, Transgender, Transsexual or otherwise.

**'Catchment Area'** refers to the designated residential area for application to St Declan's Community College in respect of the person on whose behalf the application is being made. The catchment area for St Declan's Community College is defined as having any of the following areas as part of an applicant's address; Annestown, Ballyduff Lower, Ballylaneen, Bonmahon, Butlerstown, Clonea Power, Dunhill, Faha, Fenor, Fewes, Kill, Kilmacthomas, Kilmeaden, Kilrossanty, Knockmahon, Leamybrien, Newtown (Kilmacthomas), Portlaw, Rathgormack, Seafield, or Stradbally.

**'Parent'** has the same meaning as in the Education Act 1998 and includes a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997.

**'Feeder Primary Schools'** refers to the primary schools of preference for application to St Declan's Community College. The feeder primary schools for St Declan's Community College are divided into two groups. The schools listed in both groups appear in alphabetical order. Group A consists of the three national schools that are located within a 4-kilometre radius of St Declan's Community College. The schools in this group of primary schools are generally resident in areas that are not served by a school transport route to any other post primary school. Group B consists of an additional 13 feeder national schools.

### Group A:

- 1.1 Scoil Naisiunta na Bhfiodh, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford
- 1.2 Scoil Choill Mhic Thomaisin, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford
- 1.3 Scoil Naisiunta an Baile Nua, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford

### Group B:

- 2.1. Ballyduff National School, Kilmeaden, Co Waterford -
- 2.2. Clonea National School, Carrick on Suir, Co Waterford -
- 2.3. Fionnabhair National School, Fenor, Co Waterford -
- 2.4. Our Lady of Mercy National School, Stradbally, Co Waterford -
- 2.5. Portlaw National School, Portlaw, Co Waterford
- 2.6. Rathgormack National School, Rathgormack, Co Waterford
- 2.7. Scoil Naisiunta Aine Naofa Seafield, Bonmahon, Co Waterford -
- 2.8. Scoil Naisiunta an Garrain Bhain, Dungarvan, Co Waterford -
- 2.9. Scoil Naisiunta Cill Rosanta, Kilrossanty, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford -
- 2.10. Scoil Naisiunta Cnoc Mahon, Knockmahon, Bunmahon Co Waterford -

- 2.11. Scoil Naisiunta na Cille, Kill, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford -
- 2.12. Scoil Naisiunta Dun Aill, Dunhill, Co Waterford -
- 2.13. St James' National School/Stradbally Church of Ireland National School, Stradbally, Co Waterford
- 2.14. Waterford Educate Together N.S., Carrickpherish, Waterford City<sup>1</sup>

For the purpose of this policy '**Staff member**' refers to Teachers registered with the Teaching Council and who are currently contracted by WWETB to teach in this school in a PWT/CID/FT capacity, and other staff who are paid employees of the WWETB and who are currently (at the time of application), employed on an ongoing and non-temporary basis by the WWETB.

**'Special Class'** means a class that has, with the approval of the Minister of Education and Skills, been established by a school to provide an education exclusively for Students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister of Education and Skills. St Declan's Community College has a Special Class, established to cater for special educational needs of Students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

**'Relevant Report'**, as advised by the Department of Education and Skills and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), means a written report based on an assessment by a relevant professional who makes a recommendation for a Special Class placement in a mainstream school. The relevant professional may include an educational psychologist, psychologist, other relevant health professionals, HSE disability services or HSE multi-disciplinary team staff, in line with guidance issued by the NCSE on this point.

**'First-Year'** means the intake group of Students for the most junior class or year in a school.

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<sup>1</sup> Provided that St Declan's' Community College is the nearest multi denominational post primary school to the applicant's normal residence. Where that is not the case, the Applicant is not regarded as having attend a feeder primary school for St Declan's Community College.

## 2 ADMISSION STATEMENT

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ETB schools are state, co-educational, multid denominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education;
- Care;
- Equality;
- Community and
- Respect.



As the state provider of education, the ETB sector defines a ‘multidenominational’ school in the following way:

In ETB schools, all students are given equal opportunities for enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. Once enrolled, our schools strive to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life all members of our school communities are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.

Our schools provide a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. They strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents, and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive, and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

In ETB schools, students of all religions and beliefs are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and beliefs.

Accordingly, St Declan’s Community College shall not discriminate in its admission of a Student based on the following grounds:

- 2.1. Gender of the Student or Applicant. However, where a school admits students of one gender only, it is not discriminatory to refuse to admit Students not of that gender;
- 2.2. Civil status of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.3. Family status of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.4. Sexual orientation of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.5. Religion of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.6. Disability of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.7. Race of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.8. The Student’s or Applicant’s membership of the Traveller community;
- 2.9. Special educational needs of the Student or Applicant. However, where the school provides education exclusively for a category or categories of special educational need(s) in a Special Class, it is not discriminatory to refuse to admit to that class a Student who does not have the specified special educational need(s).

St Declan’s Community College shall not charge fees or payments or seek contributions as a condition of admission or continued enrolment of a Student.

### 3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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WWETB was established under the Education and Training Board Act 2013 which sets out the functions of all ETBs, including to establish and maintain recognised schools, centres for education and education and training facilities in each ETB's functional area.

The board of management of St Declan's Community College is a committee established under section 44 of the Education and Training Board Act 2013 and also constitutes a board of management within the meaning of the Education Act 1998.

The Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 place a duty on all recognised schools to prepare and publish an Admission Policy.

The Education Act, 1998 provides for an appeal process in the event of a refusal to enrol. The appeal process is set out in section 5.2 in respect of applications made to the First-Year group and in section 6.2 in respect of applications made to all year other than the First-Year group.

Under Section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 the board of management has a responsibility to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school and has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and the staff. Where the admission of an applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or the students and staff of the school, or pose a significant risk to the right of other students to an appropriate education then such an application for admission may be refused by the board of management.

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. It is also important to understand the 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 **particular** religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.
- *Religious education* is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.

As ETB schools are 'multi-denominational', St Declan's Community College supports the provision of *religious education* that caters for all students regardless of their religious or non-religious beliefs.

## 4 GENERAL ADMISSION PROVISIONS

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A decision on an application for admission shall be based on:

- the implementation of this Admission Policy,
- the annual admission notice of the school, and the
- information provided by the Applicant in the application for admission.

In processing an application St Declan's Community College **shall not consider**:

- 4.1 The payment of fees or contributions to the school;
- 4.2 A Student's academic ability, skills, or aptitude; unless:
  - it is necessary to ascertain whether or not the Student has the category of special educational needs concerned for admission to a school approved by the Minister of Education and Skills providing education exclusively to Students with a specified category of special educational needs or a special class;
- 4.3 The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills, or aptitude of a Student's Parent(s).
- 4.4 A requirement that a Student or his or her Parent(s), attend an interview, open day, or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- 4.5 A Student's connection to the school due to a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school, unless the connection is a sibling of the Student concerned attending, or having attended, the school, or a parent or grandparent having previously attended the school. However, the maximum number of places filled by this criterion does not exceed 25% of the available places as set out in the school's admission notice for 2020/2021.
- 4.6 The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school as long as it is received during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admissions notice for that academic year.

**St Declan's Community College will consider** the offer of a place to every Student seeking admission to the school, **unless any one of the following applies**:

- 4.7 The Parent fails to confirm in writing that s/he accepts the Student Code of Behaviour and he/she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the Student;
- 4.8 The Student seeking admission to a Special Class in the school does not have the category of special educational needs specified by the Minister of Education and Skills in respect of that class.
- 4.9 Where the admission of an applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or the students and staff of the school, or pose a significant risk to the right of other students to an appropriate education then such an application for admission may be refused by the board of management.
- 4.10 Where the student is not eligible to be admitted as a recognised pupil in accordance with the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools.

Where St Declan's Community College considers an application, each Student shall receive a place, unless the school is oversubscribed, in which case, selection criteria will be applied to each application.

Section 5 of this Policy addresses the selection criteria and other matters related to the admission provisions for the first-year group.

Section 6 of this Policy addresses the selection criteria and other matters related to the admission provisions for all year groups other than first-year.

Section 7 of this Policy addresses the selection criteria and other matters related to the admission provisions for the special class.



## **PART B - *Information for Specific Categories of Applicants***

### **5 APPLICATION TO THE FIRST-YEAR GROUP**

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#### **5.1 Admission Provisions (First-Year group)**

- 5.1.1. Oversubscription
- 5.1.2. Selection criteria in order of priority
- 5.1.3. Selection process
- 5.1.4. Late Applications
- 5.1.5. Second/third-round offers of a place
- 5.1.6. Acceptance of a place
- 5.1.7. Refusal
- 5.1.8. Appeals

#### **5.2 Appeals**

- 5.2.1. Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription
- 5.2.2. Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription
- 5.2.3. Basis for appeal

## **5.1 ADMISSION PROVISIONS (FIRST YEAR GROUP)**

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Where St Declan's Community College is not oversubscribed, all Students will be offered a school place, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

A Student applying for the First Year Group but seeking admission to the Special Class should see section 7 of this Admissions Policy. If the Student is also applying for a place in the mainstream First-Year Group in the event of an unsuccessful application to the Special Class, this section 5 is also applicable.

For clarity, it is possible to seek admission to both the Special Class and the mainstream First-Year group and be offered a place in both the Special Class and the mainstream First-Year Group or the mainstream First-Year group only. It is not possible to be offered a place in the Special Class only.

### **5.1.1 Oversubscription**

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 5.1.2 below 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. Where St Declan's Community College is in a position to offer further school places that become available for and during that academic year, places will be offered in accordance with the order of priority in which Students have been placed on the waiting list.

For the avoidance of doubt, if a Student does not receive a place in the school for a given academic year, but s/he wishes to be considered for admission to the same year group in the following academic year, a new application must be made on behalf of that Student during the dates specified by the school as being the period when it will accept applications to all year groups other than First-Year.

Where an application is made on behalf of a Student for both the Special Class and a mainstream year group, and his/her application for one but not both is successful, s/he will remain in the same position on the waiting list for the group to which s/he was not successful, regardless of whether the Applicant accepts the place in the group to which the Student was successful.

Where the school is oversubscribed, any selection criteria that are not included in this Admission Policy shall not be considered in determining whether or not a Student is admitted to the school.

### **5.1.2 Selection criteria in order of priority**

St Declan's Community College will apply the following criteria for admission to the first-year group: If a student meets the needs of criteria 5.1.2.1 or 5.1.2.2 they may secure a place in St Declan's Community College. If however, the number of students who meet these criteria exceeds the number of places available a lottery will be held to decide on which students secure a place in the school and those students who need to be placed on a waiting list.

- 5.1.2.1 If the student has a sibling(s) currently enrolled in the school
- 5.1.2.2 If the student is a child of a member of staff of St Declan's Community College.
- 5.1.2.3 If the student attends any one of the 3 Group A feeder primary schools listed in the glossary of terms; (5 marks)
- 5.1.2.4 If the student attends any one of the 13 Group B feeder primary schools listed in the glossary of terms (4 marks)
- 5.1.2.5 If the Student resides in the catchment area (3 marks)
- 5.1.2.6 If the Student has siblings who were previously enrolled in the school (2 marks)
- 5.1.2.7 If the Student had a parent or grandparent who previously attended the school (to a maximum of 25% of the places available) (1 mark)

See section 7 for selection criteria applicable to admission to the Special Class.

### **5.1.3 Selection process**

St Declan's Community College will apply the selection process as follows:

Applications are considered against the published selection criteria. Places will be offered in the first instance to those who meet the first criterion. Subsequently, where the school still has places available, the remaining Applicants are considered in light of the second criterion and those Applicants who meet this criterion will be offered a place within the school.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, St Declan's Community College will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

Subsequently, where the school still has places available, the remaining applicants are considered in light of the number of marks awarded for each of the criteria they meet. A weighting system will be applied to the selection criteria. The mark for each criterion is indicated in brackets beside it. Students will be allocated any remaining places based on the number of marks scored. Students will be allocated places starting with the highest score, followed by the next highest mark until all remaining places have been filled.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process (i.e. have the same marks), St Declan's Community College will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications until all Applicants with the same marks are assigned any available places in the school, or onto the waiting list. This process is continuously carried out until all available places have been offered and accepted.

N.B. The number of places available in a year group is subject to reduction in the event that a placement(s) in the Special Class is/are given to Student(s) from that year group, *i.e.* the selection process for the Special Class will be completed before the selection process for the mainstream year group and the number of Students who are offered a place in the Special Class will be the number by which the places in the relevant mainstream year group(s) are reduced<sup>2</sup>.

### **5.1.4 Late applications**

An application received by St Declan's Community College after the closing date published by St Declan's Community College, and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Where St Declan's Community College is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, same will receive a place on the waiting list beneath Applicants whose applications were received by St Declan's Community College before the closing date for applications. Such applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the school, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

Where St Declan's Community College is not oversubscribed and it receives a late application, the Student seeking admission will receive an offer of a place within St Declan's Community College, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 and the same process as applies to Applicants whose applications were

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<sup>2</sup> This approach is based on section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004, which requires that: "A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out .... or the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated."

received before the closing date will be operated *i.e.* an Acceptance Form will be issued to the Applicant for completion and return to the school within 2 weeks of issue.

#### **5.1.5 Second/third-round offers of a place**

Where a Student is in receipt of an offer of a place within St Declan's Community College but does not accept the offer, or fails to accept within the specified time period, or the school withdraws the offer in line with the relevant provisions of this Policy, the place will be offered to the next Student on the waiting list in a second-round of offers. This process will continue throughout third and fourth rounds *etc.* until all places within the school have been filled.

#### **5.1.6 Acceptance of a place**

If the Student in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the school.

The Applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school.

Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for refusal as set out below.

#### **5.1.7 Refusal**

Where a Student in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 5.1.7.1. The reasons that the Student was not offered a place in St Declan's Community College.
- 5.1.7.2. Details of the Student's ranking against the published selection criteria if the year-group to which the Applicant is applying is oversubscribed,
- 5.1.7.3. Details of the Student's place on the waiting list, if applicable, and
- 5.1.7.4. Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision.

In addition to the conditions for consideration of an application as set out at 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10, an offer of admission may not be made where:

- 5.1.7.5. The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- 5.1.7.5. The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect, or
- 5.1.7.6. The 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 for the academic year for which s/he is applying, or in the case of a late application, or second/third-round offer, within 2 weeks, or
- 5.1.7.7. An Applicant has not indicated:
  - (i) whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s);
  - and

- (ii) whether or not or s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).

If an offer of a place is withdrawn by the school, the Student on whose behalf the application was made shall lose his/her place on the admission list or waiting list for that academic year and any subsequent applications for the same academic year on behalf of that Student shall be treated as a late application in line with section 5.1.4 above.

#### **5.1.8 Appeals**

For information relating to an Applicant's right to appeal a decision of St Declan's Community College regarding admission to the First-Year group, see section 5.2

## **5.2. APPEALS (FIRST YEAR GROUP)**

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### **5.2.1 Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission because the school is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision must submit his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of St Declan's Community College, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford (051) 294 100 , stdeclanscc@wwetb.ie. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

If an Applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, or the board of management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the Applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **5.2.2 Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission to St Declan's Community College for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may choose to put his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of St Declan's Community College. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this policy, same shall apply instead.

Alternatively, s/he may choose to apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

If an Applicant who chooses to appeal to the board of management is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, the Applicant may also apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **5.2.3 Basis for appeal:**

As required by section 29C(2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admission Policy, the content of the school's Admission Notice and also set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.

## **6 APPLICATION TO ALL YEAR GROUPS OTHER THAN FIRST-YEAR**

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### **6.1 Admission Provisions (other than First-Year)**

- 6.1.1. Oversubscription
- 6.1.2. Selection criteria in order of priority
- 6.1.3. Selection process
- 6.1.4. Late Applications
- 6.1.5. Second/third-round offers of a place
- 6.1.6. Acceptance of a place
- 6.1.7. Refusal
- 6.1.8. Withdrawal of an offer
- 6.1.9. Appeals

### **6.2 Appeals**

- 6.2.1 Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription
- 6.2.2 Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription
- 6.2.3 Basis for appeal

## **6.1 ADMISSION PROVISIONS (OTHER THAN FIRST-YEAR)**

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Where St Declan's Community College is not oversubscribed, all Students will be offered a school place, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

A Student applying for admission to a year-group other than First-Year but seeking admission to the Special Class should see section 7 of this Admissions Policy. If the Student is also applying for a place in the mainstream year group other than First-Year in the event of an unsuccessful application to the Special Class, this section 6 is also applicable.

For clarity, it is possible to seek admission to both the Special Class and the mainstream Year group and be offered a place in both the Special Class and the mainstream Year Group or the mainstream Year group only. It is not possible to be offered a place in the Special Class only.

### **6.1.1 Oversubscription**

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 6.1.2 below 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. Where St Declan's Community College is in a position to offer further school places that become available for and during that academic year, places will be offered in accordance with the order of priority in which Students have been placed on the waiting list.

For the avoidance of doubt, if a Student does not receive a place in the school for a given academic year, but s/he wishes to be considered for admission to the same year group in the following academic year, a new application must be made on behalf of that Student during the dates specified by the school as being the period when it will accept applications to all years other than the First Year Group.

Where an application is made on behalf of a Student for both the Special Class and a mainstream year group, and his/her application for one but not both is successful, s/he will remain in the same position on the waiting list for the group to which s/he was not successful, regardless of whether the Applicant accepts the place in the group to which the Student was successful.

Where the school is oversubscribed, any selection criteria that are not included in this Admission Policy shall not be considered in determining whether or not a Student is admitted to the school.

Where the Transition Year Programme and/or Leaving Certificate Applied Programme in St Declan's Community College are oversubscribed, a Student applying for admission to such programmes in the relevant year group, will, subject to this policy, be placed on the appropriate waiting list already compiled annually by the school, which list will contain the names of students enrolled in the school who have been placed on an internal waiting list for these programmes.

### **6.1.2 Selection criteria in order of priority**

St Declan's Community College will apply the following criteria for admission to a year-group other than First-Year:

- 6.1.2.1 If the student has a sibling(s) currently enrolled in the school
- 6.1.2.2 If the student is a child of a member of staff of St Declan's Community College.
- 6.1.2.3 If the Student resides in the catchment area
- 6.1.2.4 If the Student has siblings who were previously enrolled in the school
- 6.1.2.5 If the Student had a parent who previously attended the school (to a maximum of 25% of the places available)



See section 7 for selection criteria applicable to admission to the Special Class.

### **6.1.3 Selection Process**

St Declan's Community College will apply the selection process as follows:

Applications are considered against the published selection criteria. Places will be offered in the first instance to those who meet the first criterion. Subsequently, where the school still has places available, the remaining Applicants are considered in light of the second criterion and those Applicants who meet this criterion will be offered a place within the school. This process is continuously carried out until all available places have been offered and accepted.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, St Declan's Community College will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

N.B. The number of places available in a year group is subject to reduction in the event that a placement(s) in the Special Class is/are given to Student(s) from that year group, *i.e.* the selection process for the Special Class will be completed before the selection process for the mainstream year group and the number of Students who are offered a place in the Special Class will be the number by which the places in the relevant mainstream year group(s) are reduced<sup>3</sup>.

### **6.1.4 Late applications:**

An application received by St Declan's Community College after the closing date published by St Declan's Community College, and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Where St Declan's Community College is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, same will receive a place on the waiting list beneath Applicants whose applications were received by St Declan's Community College before the closing date for applications. Such applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the school, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

Where St Declan's Community College is not oversubscribed and it receives a late application, the Student seeking admission will receive an offer of a place within St Declan's Community College, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10, and the same process as applies to Applicants whose applications were received before the closing date will be operated *i.e.* an Acceptance Form will be issued to the Applicant for completion and return to the school within 2 weeks of issue.

### **6.1.5 Second/third-round offers of a place**

Where a Student is in receipt of an offer of a place within St Declan's Community College but does not accept the offer, or fails to accept within the specified time period, or the school withdraws the offer in line with the relevant provisions of this Policy, the place will be offered to the next Student on the waiting list in a second-round of offers. This process will continue throughout third and fourth rounds *etc.* until all places within the school have been filled.

### **6.1.6 Acceptance of a place:**

If the Student in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the school.

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<sup>3</sup> This approach is based on section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004, which requires that: "*A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out .... or the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.*"

The Applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school.

Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for refusal as set out below.

#### **6.1.7 Refusal:**

Where a Student in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 6.1.7.1. The reasons that the Student was not offered a place in St Declan's Community College.
- 6.1.7.2. Details of the Student's ranking against the published selection criteria, if the year group to which the Applicant is applying is oversubscribed.
- 6.1.7.3. Details of the Student's place on the waiting list, if applicable
- 6.1.7.4. Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision

In addition to the conditions for consideration of an application as set out at 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10, an offer of admission may not be made where:

- 6.1.7.5. The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- 6.1.7.5. The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect, or
- 6.1.7.6. The 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 for the academic year for which s/he is applying, or in the case of a late application, or second/third-round offer, within 2 weeks, or
- 6.1.7.7. An Applicant has not indicated:
  - (i) whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s);
  - and
  - (ii) whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).

#### **6.1.8 Appeals:**

For information relating to an Applicant's right to appeal a decision of St Declan's Community College regarding admission to the Special Class, see section 6.2.

## **6.2 APPEALS (OTHER THAN FIRST-YEAR)**

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### **6.2.1 Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission because the school is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision must submit his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of St Declan's Community College, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford (051) 294 100 , stdeclanscc@wwetb.ie. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

If an Applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, or the board of management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the Applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **6.2.2 Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission to St Declan's Community College for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may choose to put his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of St Declan's Community College. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this policy, same shall apply instead.

Alternatively, s/he may choose to apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

If an Applicant who chooses to appeal to the board of management is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, the Applicant may also apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **6.2.3 Basis for appeal:**

As required by section 29C(2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admission Policy, the content of the school's Admission Notice and also set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.

## **7 APPLICATION TO THE SPECIAL CLASS**

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### **7.1 Admission Provisions for the Special Class**

- 7.1.1. Oversubscription
- 7.1.2. Selection criteria in order of priority
- 7.1.3. Selection process
- 7.1.4. Late Applications
- 7.1.5. Second/third-round offers of a place
- 7.1.6. Acceptance of a place
- 7.1.7. Refusal
- 7.1.8. Withdrawal of an offer

### **2. Appeals**

- 7.2.1. Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription
- 7.2.2. Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription
- 7.2.3. Basis for appeal

## **7.1 ADMISSION PROVISIONS FOR THE SPECIAL CLASS**

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St Declan's Community College has been sanctioned for 1 Special Class with a maximum overall enrolment of 6 students, established to cater for the special educational needs of Students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Only applications in respect of Students whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the Special Class will be considered. In this respect, the school requires that such needs of the Student be verified in a Relevant Report which has been prepared within the 12 months immediately preceding the Student's application to the Special Class.

Where the Special Class in St Declan's Community College is not oversubscribed, all Students whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the Special Class will be offered a place in the Special Class, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

For clarity, it is possible to seek admission to both the Special Class and the mainstream Year group and be offered a place in either both the Special Class and the mainstream Year Group or the mainstream Year group only. It is not possible to be offered a place in the Special Class only.

### **7.1.1 Oversubscription:**

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 7.1.2 below will apply and a waiting list shall be compiled which shall remain valid only for the school year in respect of which the applications are made. Where St Declan's Community College is in a position to offer further places that become available in the Special Class for and during that academic year, places will be offered in accordance with the order of priority in which Students have been placed on the waiting list.

Where an application is made on behalf of a Student for both the Special Class and a mainstream year group, and his/her application for one but not both is successful, s/he will remain in the same position on the waiting list for the group to which s/he was not successful, regardless of whether the Applicant accepts the place in the group to which the Student was successful.

For the avoidance of doubt, if a Student does not receive a place in the Special Class for a given academic year, but s/he wishes to be considered for admission to the Special Class in the following academic year, a new application must be made on behalf of that Student during the dates specified by the school as being the period when it will accept applications for the Special Class.

If a transfer Student is offered a place in the Special Class from the waiting list, the offer is subject to there being a place available in the relevant year group for that Student. If there is not a place available in the relevant year group, the next person on the waiting list for the Special Class will be considered for the place in question but this will not change the initial Student's place on the waiting list for the Special Class for the remainder of that school year, i.e. if another place subsequently became available in the Special Class during that school year, the initial Student at the top of the waiting list would be considered first, but again subject to there being a place in the relevant year group for that Student.

For clarity, even if a place becomes available in a given mainstream year group, if there is a waiting list for that year group, the Students on that list have first refusal at the place in the year group irrespective of any matters relating to the Special Class.

Where the school is oversubscribed, any selection criteria that are not included in this Admission Policy shall not be considered in determining whether or not a Student is admitted to the school.

### **7.1.2 Selection criteria in order of priority:**

Applications to the Special Class will only be considered if the Student's needs fall within the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this class. Subject to this requirement, in the event of oversubscription, the following criteria for admission to the Special Class will apply:

- 7.1.2.1 If the student has a sibling(s) currently enrolled in the school
- 7.1.2.2 If the student is a child of a member of staff of St Declan's Community College
- 7.1.2.3 If the student attends any one of the 3 Group A feeder primary schools listed in the glossary of terms (5 marks)
- 7.1.2.4 If the student attends any one of the 13 Group B feeder primary schools listed in the glossary of terms (4 marks)
- 7.1.2.5 If the Student resides in the catchment area (3 marks)
- 7.1.2.6 If the Student has siblings who were previously enrolled in the school (2 marks)
- 7.1.2.7 If the Student had a parent or grandparent who previously attended the school (to a maximum of 25% of the places available) (1 mark)

### **7.1.3 Selection process:**

St Declan's Community College will apply the selection process as follows:

Having met the criteria for admission to the Special Class, applications are considered against the published selection criteria. Places will be offered in the first instance to those who meet the first criterion. Subsequently, where the school still has places available, the remaining Applicants are considered in light of the second criterion and those Applicants who meet this criterion will be offered a place within the Special Class.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, St Declan's Community College will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the Special Class, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

Subsequently, where the school still has places available, the remaining applicants are considered in light of the number of marks awarded for each of the criteria they meet. A weighting system will be applied to the selection criteria. The mark for each criterion is indicated in brackets beside it. Students will be allocated any remaining places based on the number of marks scored. Students will be allocated places starting with the highest score, followed by the next highest mark until all remaining places have been filled.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process (i.e. have the same marks), St Declan's Community College will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications until all Applicants with the same marks are assigned any available places in the school, or onto the waiting list. This process is continuously carried out until all available places have been offered and accepted.

N.B. The number of places available in a year group is subject to reduction in the event that a placement(s) in the Special Class is/are given to Student(s) from that year group, i.e. the selection process for the Special Class will be completed before the selection process for the mainstream year group and the number of Students who are offered a place in the Special Class will be the number by which the places in the relevant mainstream year group(s) are reduced.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This approach is based on section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004, which requires that: "A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out .... or the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated."

#### **7.1.4 Late applications:**

An application received by St Declan's Community College after the closing date published by St Declan's Community College, and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Where St Declan's Community College is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, same will receive a place on the waiting list beneath Applicants whose applications were received by St Declan's Community College before the closing date for applications. Such applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the school, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

Where St Declan's Community College is not oversubscribed and it receives a late application, the Student seeking admission will receive an offer of a place within St Declan's Community College, subject to sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10. and the same process as applies to Applicants whose applications were received before the closing date will be operated *i.e.* an Acceptance Form will be issued to the Applicant for completion and return to the school within 2 weeks of issue.

#### **7.1.5 Second/third-round offers of a place**

Where a Student is in receipt of an offer of a place within St Declan's Community College but does not accept the offer, or fails to accept within the specified time period, or the school withdraws the offer in line with the relevant provisions of this Policy, the place will be offered to the next Student on the waiting list in a second-round of offers. This process will continue throughout third and fourth rounds *etc.* until all places within the school have been filled.

#### **7.1.6 Acceptance of a place:**

If the Student in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the school.

The Applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school.

Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for refusal as set out below.

#### **7.1.7 Refusal:**

Where a Student in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 7.1.7.1 The reasons that the Student was not offered a place in St Declan's Community College.
- 7.1.7.2 Details of the Student's ranking against the published selection criteria, if the year-group to which the applicant is applying is oversubscribed,
- 7.1.7.3 Details of the Student's place on the waiting list, if applicable, and
- 7.1.7.4 Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision

In addition to the conditions for consideration of an application as set out at 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10, an offer of admission may not be made where:

- 7.1.7.5 The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect

**7.1.8 Withdrawal of an offer**

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- 7.1.7.5 The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect, or
- 7.1.7.6 The 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 for the 2020/2021 academic year, or in the case of a late application, or second/third-round offer, within 2 weeks, or
- 7.1.7.7 An Applicant has not indicated:
  - (i) whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s);  
and
  - (ii) whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).



## **7.2 APPEALS (SPECIAL CLASS)**

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### **7.2.1 Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission because the school is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision must submit his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of St Declan's Community College, Kilmacthomas, Co Waterford (051) 294 100 , stdeclanscc@wwetb.ie. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

If an Applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, or the board of management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the Applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **7.2.2 Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission to St Declan's Community College for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may choose to put his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of St Declan's Community College. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this policy, same shall apply instead.

Alternatively, s/he may choose to apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

If an Applicant who chooses to appeal to the board of management is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, the Applicant may also apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **7.2.3 Basis for appeal:**

As required by section 29C(2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admission Policy, the content of the school's Admission Notice and also set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.