



# St. Ita's Special School

Crushrod Ave. Drogheda Co. Louth

Tel 041-9831303 Mob: 086-3998489

Web: [www.stitasspecialschool.ie](http://www.stitasspecialschool.ie)

Roll No.18936k



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## ST.ITA'S SPECIAL SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY

Patron : Archbishop Eamon Martin

Archdiocese of Armagh

### 1.Introduction

1.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 31/08/20. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St.Ita's Special School 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.



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## 2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

2.1. St. Ita's is a special school providing for the academic, personal and social needs of pupils from five to eighteen years, who can best benefit educationally from attending St. Ita's School. Our aim is to give our students a caring and inspiring academic environment to enable them to achieve their full potential in life.

2.2. St. Ita's is a Catholic co-educational Special school with a Catholic ethos.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Ita's Special School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron 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.

Our School offers a Primary /Junior Cycle L1LP/L2LP and a Leaving Programme { QQI Level 1,2,and 3 }

2.3. The primary class follow the Primary School Curriculum and our wide range of educational programming is sequential, based on the chronological age of students, and is designed to enhance and maximize every child's potential. We use the Aistear programme throughout all classes of the primary school. taking a themed approach across most subject areas.

2.4. The Junior Cycle Programme in St. Ita's encompasses levels 1 and 2 , as appropriate for our students.



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2.5. Our Learning for Life, QQI Level 1,2 and 3 courses form the foundation of our leaving programme. The course aims to prepare our students for the transition to further education and/or the working world when they leave St.Ita's and cover a wide variety of modules such as Communications/ Language Numeracy, Horticulture, Personal Decision Making, Food Choice and Health etc.

2.6. This document sets out how decisions are made regarding admissions. The main criterion for admitting a child who applies for a place is that we have a vacancy in the school which is appropriate given the age and educational needs of the applicant.

2.7. Because of the range of special needs our school caters for, class sizes may vary from class to class depending on the number of pupils within a class presenting with additional needs. In this regard, some classes may be deemed by the Principal to be full to capacity, and in this case the Board of Management may direct that no additional pupils may enrol in these classes during the year. School capacity varies according to the needs of the children we are catering for at a particular time.

### 3. Admission Statement

3.1. Each child is considered as an individual. The Board of Management strives to ensure that every child accepted into St.Ita's School can benefit from the services on offer. The decision as to who will benefit involves the consideration of a wide range of issues. These issues will include the parents'/guardians' views on the proposed educational placement of their child, existing resources available, additional learning and medical needs (for example, autism, ADHD, severe emotional behavioural disorder, dysphasia, epilepsy, etc.) social needs, emotional and behavioural needs. While recognising the right of parents/guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management is also responsible for respecting the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children.

3.2. In the admissions process, consideration will be given to ensure that a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff prevails and applications for children who might threaten the safety of the children already enrolled, many of whom are vulnerable by nature of their disability are likely to be refused.



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3.3. In accordance with Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998, this policy sets out St. Ita's School's policy on the admission of students and their participation in the school.

3.4. In accordance with Section 61 of the Education Act 1998 the school confirms that the school shall not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on

(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.

(i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

3.5. St. Ita's School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister and Department of Education and Skills provides an education exclusively to students with a certain category of special educational needs, that being students who have a mild or borderline mild learning disability. The school will therefore refuse to admit students whose educational needs do not fall within this category and a refusal to admit a child who does not have these educational will not constitute discrimination.

3.6. This policy aims to uphold the moral, spiritual, physical and psychological welfare and constitutional rights of all persons concerned. The school will strive to ensure that the principle of "reasonable accommodation" is enacted for all students.

3.7. Where places are oversubscribed, offers for places will be made for each September to applicants who meet the Threshold Criteria in order of priority to those applicants who are rated highest on the criteria set out in section 5.7 below.



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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.

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

St. Ita's Special School is a school which with the approval of the Minister and Department of Education and Skills provides an education exclusively to students who have Mild General Learning Needs, students with I.Q. 50—70 see Application Procedure. Students with a diagnosis of A.S.D. and MGLD. Students with Moderate General Learning Need, with adaptive functioning in the Mild range whose needs will be best met in St Ita's School as recommended by the psychologist and approved by the S.E.N.O.

## 5. Admission of Students and Admissions Process

5.1. The General Principle of St. Ita's School is to provide an education exclusively for students who have a Mild General Learning Disability and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school. St. Ita's School must verify that all applicants possess this category of need. The steps below are for the purpose of ascertaining if applicants come within the category of special needs catered for by the school and the steps therefore apply to all applications regardless of whether the destination class in question is oversubscribed or not.

### 5.2. Overview of Application and Admissions Process

5.2.1. Parents/guardians are asked to contact the school to obtain an Application Form from the school office. This form must be completed in full and all requested documentation must be included to be considered for admission. Applications will only be accepted for the following year of entry from the 1st October onwards. The Application Form must be returned before the Closing Date for Applications for that particular year of entry. The closing date is set out in the annual Admissions Notice published on the school website. We are often



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substantially over-subscribed and it is not fair to those who applied in time if we consider applications received outside that period.

5.2.2. Please note Applications are accepted each year ONLY between 1st October and the Closing Date as per our Admission Notice. Applications received before that period WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED and will be returned to the sender. Applications which are returned to a parent due to the application being received out of time can be appealed in accordance with the procedure set out at Section 18 below.

5.2.3. Please note that St. Ita's Special School does not have a particular intake group as many mainstream schools do. In our school, we accept applications from children aged between 5 on the first of September in the year of entry and less than 18 on the 1st September in the year of entry. Class groupings vary from year to year as students leave the school or move to other schools and also take into consideration the pupils already enrolled and their additional needs.

5.2.4. Please note that subject to the school not being oversubscribed (i.e. that there are places available in the class assigned to the applicant) the policy of the school is to admit all applicants - whose special education needs fall within the categories of need catered for by the school, and - who have submitted the appropriate documentation to establish this profile of special educational need, and - who fulfil the Threshold criteria set out below at Section 5.7, and - whose parents/guardians have confirmed that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by their child.

5.3. Initial School Visit Before making any application, the child's parents/guardians may wish to consider visiting the school so that they will be better able to decide on the suitability of the school for their child. If they are considering making such a visit they should try and do so before February prior to the September of entry to allow enough time for the family to reflect on whether St. Ita's would be a good fit for their child before making an application to the school. Such a visit will not give their child any priority and is solely to allow the parents to inform themselves better about the school. Parents/Guardians of prospective students are also encouraged to attend the school's open day usually held every February.

5.4. Who can make an Application? St. Ita's School welcomes applications from parents/guardians. As the Constitution recognises parents as the primary educators of their child, applications will only be accepted from parents, legal guardians or someone acting on foot of a court order or statutory power in a parental role.

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5.5. Steps in the Application and Admissions Process The following procedure will apply to all applications for placement in the School:

a) Parents/guardians obtain a copy of the Admissions and Participation Policy and Application Form from the school School Office;

b) Parents are asked to return the following:

i. Completed Application form;

ii. Full birth certificate;

iii. Proof of Address e.g. utility bill; household bill, etc.

iv. Recent psychological assessment report (from within the last 24 months and which must contain a detailed recommendation from the Psychologist for the child to attend a special school with a statement from the Psychologist as to why a special school placement would be more appropriate for this child than a mainstream school placement);

v. Up to date reports from the child's present school/pre-school (from within the last 24 months) with the details of the learning and social development of the child and any behaviour issues of relevance.

vi. Any other professional reports available from the last 24 months such as: • Psychiatric Assessment, • Speech & Language Assessment, • Occupational Therapy, • Social Work Report,

c) Following receipt of the Application form and submitted materials, the Board will arrange a meeting to determine the allocation of places, as per the criteria set out below. Each applicant will be assigned a class based on their age. If all the documents listed at 5.5 (b)(i)- (vi) are not included with the application, the application will be deemed incomplete, will be returned to the child's parents and will not be considered.

d) The Board of Management will consider each application in light of the Threshold Criteria regardless of whether the applicant's destination class is oversubscribed or not. If the destination class is oversubscribed, each application for that class will be assessed in accordance with the Assessment Criteria set out below in Section 6.



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e) If the Board of Management decides to admit a child, a letter of offer will be sent to parents along with the school's Code of Behaviour. This letter of offer will be issued within 21 days of the Closing Date for applications (or within 21 days of the receipt of the application, whichever is the later). The offer will be subject to parents providing a written agreement for their child to adhere to the school's Code of behaviour and the other policies listed on the Application Form. If the Board decides not to enrol a child the parents of the child will also be informed within 21 days and will be provided with reasons for non-admission as per Section. If the Board of Management have accepted the child for admission, the Board will then inform the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the decision and seek its approval for the placement and its sanction for school transport arrangement. This process may take 6 to 8 weeks.

f) Parents/guardians will be requested to respond to the offer of a place by a specified date (failure to respond by that date will result in the offer lapsing) and will return to the school the completed application forms including the NCSE school transport and SNA support forms, if applicable;

g) If the child meets the Threshold Criteria below but admission is refused on the ground that the class is full, parents/guardians will be informed that there is currently no place available but will be asked if they wish their child to be placed on the Waiting List (described below in Section 13). The school will advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.

h) If the child does not meet the Threshold Criteria below, the parents/guardians will be advised that the school is formally declining a place to their child in the school and will advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.

5.6. Principles applying to the Application and Enrolment Process Parents should note the following principles which apply to all applications for enrolment to the school:

5.6.1. Where possible, enrolment should take place at the beginning of the school year. Consideration will be given to an application during the school year where a vacancy arises and there is no applicant listed on the waiting list for that destination class.

5.6.2. The receipt by the school of a completed Application Form or the placement of a child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school. The school does not operate its applications process on a first come, first served basis - each



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application will be considered on its merits and in light of the places available in the different classes in the school.

5.6.3. Siblings of students in the school are not automatically entitled to a place in the school.

5.6.4. Please note that all reports relating to a child which have been drafted by a psychologist, psychiatrist, behavioral therapist, pediatrician or other relevant medical practitioner (who has produced a report relating to the child's cognitive development, learning ability or educational development) within the two years preceding application must be provided to the school for assessment by the Board of Management. The withholding of reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an Admission Application at any time. If, after admission, it later becomes apparent that reports or relevant information has been withheld from the school, this may result in an application being invalidated or, if it becomes apparent after admission, in the child involved losing their place in the school.

5.7. Consideration of applications - Applications for admission to St. Ita's Special School will only be considered where a child meets all of the following SEVEN criteria: Threshold Criteria for Consideration of Application: Applications will only be considered where the appropriate professional's report included in the child's application confirms that the child has either

- a Mild General Learning disability with an IQ on standardised IQ Tests of between 50 and 69, or
- a Borderline Mild general learning disability with an IQ on standardised IQ Tests of between 70 and 79 with co occurring conditions requiring special school placement (as recommended in the Psychological report.)

A high Moderate Learning disability with IQ on standardised IQ tests of between 44 and 49 and adaptive functioning that is in the Mild range and thus allowing the child to access the curriculum at a similar level to the rest of the school cohort. They must have a recommendation stating that they would be best placed in a school for MGLD.

- In both cases a recommendation from a psychologist is required outlining why placement in a special school catering for students Mild General Learning disability is more suitable than placement in a mainstream school. **AND** where **ALL** the following conditions are met:

1. The child is in the adaptive range for a child with a mild or borderline mild learning disability (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application) and

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therefore has the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered in the school;

2. The application form was fully completed and included all enclosures appropriate to the application.

3. The child is at least 5 years old and has not reached their 18th birthday on the 1st of September of the year of entry;

4. The assessment reports provided are from the last 24 months

5. That there is no evidence from assessment reports that the student has been expelled from a previous school for behavior that caused injury to others. If there is such evidence, given the vulnerable nature of students enrolled in in our school, the application will not be considered.

6. The child's primary diagnosis is not one of Emotional and Behavior Disorder. Given that we do not have the expertise to assist such children and further given the vulnerable nature of students enrolled in our school, applications in respect of children whose primary diagnosis is of Emotional and Behavior Disorder will not be considered.

5.8. Exceptional Circumstances warranting refusal of an admission - Even where the child would otherwise be eligible for admission, the school reserves the right to refuse admission to a pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

5.8.1. The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and/or the NCSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education;

5.8.2. The members of the Board of Management are reasonably clear from reports, that the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to self or other pupils, to school staff or to school property.

5.8.3. The pupil has previously been expelled from St. Ita's School or any other school in circumstances where the Board of Management feels that placement in St. Ita's School would not be appropriate for the child.

## 6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those

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applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

6.1. Priority Of Applications where the destination class is oversubscribed, places will be offered each September to qualifying applicants (i.e. those who meet all the Threshold Criteria) based on a ranking of their application on the following Assessment Criteria. Each application for an oversubscribed class will be considered by the Board and ranked in accordance with the Assessment Criteria set out below. The school has a limited number of places and must prioritise its available places for those students who would most benefit from them. Where the documentation provided is not adequate or is not in accordance with the requirements of this policy, this may result in an applicant receiving a nil score in a particular category.

Assessment Criteria: On application, students will be considered for destination classes based on their age and appropriate teacher pupil ratios applicable to each student. If the destination class for an applicant is oversubscribed, and all applicants fulfil the threshold criteria, then age will be the sole decider, with the oldest children ranking highest for each destination class.

6.2. It may occasionally occur that a child requires such additional physical space, resources or staffing support that that child effectively requires the equivalent of two or more places in that class (as determined by the child's designated pupil/teacher ratio). This may correspondingly reduce the number of other places available or may mean that even where the Board has identified a class grouping as having two available places, that class would now be full in light of that child's needs. Such a circumstance is within the discretion of the Board to limit class size where required for safety or educational reasons.

6.3. If there is no place available for the child in the assigned class then the application will be refused. If there is a place available in a particular class and there are a number of applicants for the same place, then the Board of Management will rank each such application in accordance with their marks from the Assessment Criteria above and applicants will be offered any available places based on their ranking on these criteria.

6.4. In the event of two or more children who are candidates for the same place having the same marks, the Board will first review the marking again for each such child. If the respective marks remain the same after this review, the children's names will be picked at random by an independent person (who is not on the Board or connected with any person applying for a place in the school) and the first such name picked will be offered the place. Unsuccessful applicants whose applications are ranked with the same marks will be placed on the Current Year Waiting



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List for the destination class in the order that they are picked at random by the independent person referred to above.

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

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude other than to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs catered for by St. Ita's Special School (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents; (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

## 8. Decisions on applications

8.1. The Board of Management of the school makes the final decision concerning the admission of any child.

8.2. The Board of Management will meet shortly after the Closing Date to consider all applications and the recommendations of the Admissions Committee in relation to each application.

8.3. All decisions on applications for admission to St. Ita's Special 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 (together the documentation submitted therewith) received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications



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8.4. 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”.

8.5. 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

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

9.2. 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.

9.3. 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 St. Ita’s 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 the Board of Management of St. Ita’s Special School where—

(i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading (including through the omission of any medical or psychological report, or the submission of out of date or inaccurate reports).

(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.



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(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 of this policy above.

(v) The school has been designated by the National Council for Special Education or the Child and Family Agency under S.67 of the Education Act, 1998 (when commenced) to admit a particular child and the only way to comply with the designation is to withdraw an offer of a place to another child.

## 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 data between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students. Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted. The list may include any or all of the following:
  - (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
  - (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
  - (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
  - (iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

## 13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

### 13.1. Waiting List

13.1.1. Where a place is not available for a particular child who otherwise meets the Threshold Criteria listed above in Section 5.7 and the Board of Management is refusing to enrol the child in a particular class as it is full, the parents will be asked if they wish their child be placed on the Waiting List.



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13.1.2. The Waiting List will operate for one school year. It will run until the end of the Academic Year for which the offers were made in that Applications Process. On the last of day in June of each year, the Waiting list will cease to operate.

13.1.3. If a child is entered on the Waiting List for a particular academic year, this will not give them any priority for entry in the academic year commencing the following September. A new application for the child will be required for the following academic year even if they are placed on the Waiting List and his/her application will be processed again under the Admissions Policy.

13.1.4. The child will be listed on the Waiting List only in respect of the class for which his/her application was considered (the destination class) and each child will be listed on the Waiting List in the order of their ranking according to the Assessment Criteria. If a place becomes available during the Academic Year in the destination class, the place will be offered to applicants on the Waiting List in the order that they are listed on that list.

13.1.5. If the child's parents/guardians wish to reapply for entry the following Academic year, they may do so. Their child will continue to be listed on the Waiting List in the interim until the end of the Academic Year.

13.1.6. Parents should note that if during the academic year in question, the child ceases for any reason to meet all the Threshold Criteria, the child will be removed from the Waiting List and will be formally refused a place in the school.

## 14. Late Applications

All applications for admission for a particular academic year received after the Closing Date for that year will be considered in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act. Applicants should note that the school is usually heavily oversubscribed and any such places that are available will normally be allotted to applications received before the Closing Date. Late applications will therefore most likely be waitlisted (assuming they meet the Threshold Criteria referred to above). Late applications which meet the Threshold criteria above will be placed on the Waiting List in accordance with their scores on the Assessment Criteria. Late Applications



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which do not meet the Threshold Criteria above will be refused and the parents/guardians informed of their rights of appeal/review set out below in Section 18.

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

15.1. The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows: St.It'a Special School is a special school, and as such it does not have a particular intake group as many mainstream schools do. In our school, we accept applications from children aged between 5 and 18 each year. Applications are treated as applications for particular classes. At an early stage of the application process, a child is assigned to a class based on the child's age. Class groupings vary from year to year as students leave the school or move to other schools.

15.2. The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows: All applications for admission for a particular academic year received after the start of the academic year will be treated as a Mid-Year Application for that year and will be considered in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act. Applicants should note that the school is usually heavily oversubscribed and there are rarely if ever any vacancies during the school year. Vacancies are normally filled from waiting list operated by the school in accordance with the procedures above. Mid year applications will therefore most likely be waitlisted (assuming they meet the Threshold Criteria referred to above) for the academic year in question. Mid-year applications which meet the Threshold criteria above will be placed on the Waiting List in accordance with their scores on the Assessment Criteria. Mid-year applications which do not meet the Threshold Criteria above will be refused and the parents/guardians informed of their rights of appeal/review set out below in Section 18.

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

The Board of Management of St.St.Ita's Special School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-



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- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued admission of a student in the school.

## 17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for pupils, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the pupil attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such pupils.

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the pupil, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### 18.1. Review of decisions by the Board of Management

18.1.1. The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

18.1.2. 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.

18.1.3. 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.

18.1.4. 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.



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18.1.5. Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant may request a review of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

18.2. Right of appeal 18.2.1. Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission. Page 23 of 25 18.2.2. An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

18.2.3. An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

18.2.4. Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant must request a review of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

18.2.5. Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant may request a review of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

18.2.6. Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

18.2.7. The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.



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## 19. Progression at the School and continued participation in the School.

19.1. While it is envisaged that, once admitted, most students will remain in St. Ita's School until they complete their education at 18 years of age, a child's ongoing participation at St. Ita's Special School is contingent upon the child's continued adherence to the Code of Behaviour.

19.2. Additionally, some children's needs may change overtime and exceed what the school can cater for.

19.3. If at any point during the child's time in the school, a psychiatrist or psychologist assesses the child and confirms in writing that:

a) allowing the child to remain may result in adverse educational outcomes for the child or other children in the school,

or

b) if the child applied for admission to the school now, he or she would not meet the above requirements of this policy, particularly in terms of the child's primary diagnosis, presence of Emotional and Behavioural Disorder as a primary diagnosis or the absence of a general learning difficulty, After engaging in consultation with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and having reviewed the assessment report of the professional in question, the Board of Management may decide to remove the child's name from the school roll and offer the child's place to another child.

19.4. If at any point during the child's time in the school, the Principal recommends to the Board of Management that a child enrolled in the school be sent for an assessment of the type referred to in paragraph 19.3, the Board shall seek the parent's consent for this assessment. If this consent is not forthcoming the Board may have to take a decision without the benefit of such a report and may proceed as per paragraph 19.6 below.

19.5. The report of the professional conducting the assessment will be furnished to the parents. They will be given an opportunity to respond to it and, if appropriate, to obtain a report from an appropriate professional responding to the report. Any responding report or parental response must be provided within 6 weeks of the school notifying the parents of the commencement of this process.



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19.6. The Board of Management will also ask the Principal for a detailed report setting out her/his recommendations. . All available reports (including the Principal's report) will be considered by the Board at a meeting. The parents of the child will also be provided with a copy of the Principal's report and will have the opportunity to address the Board at that meeting before the Board retires to take its decision in private. The parents will be notified of the Board's decision within 5 school days of the Board meeting to consider the reports.

19.8. The Board may decide to 19.8.1. allow the child to continue to participate in and be enrolled in the school for a specified period before the child's needs are reviewed again,

19.8.2. allow the child to continue to participate and be enrolled in the school until they reach the age of 18 and would no longer be enrolled.

19.8.3. Dis-enrol the child by removing their name from the school roll and offering the child's place to another child.

19.9. As dis-enrolment would involve the permanent exclusion of the child in accordance with S.29(1)(a) of the Education Act 1998, the child's parents may appeal this to the Department of Education and Skills within 42 days of the date of the decision to dis-enrol the child.

19.10. Where a child is being dis-enrolled from the school, the school will make every effort to support families to make the transition to another placement.

SIGNED: *Peter Kieran*

Date September 2020

CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

SIGNED : *Micéal Moley*

Date September 2020

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