

Admission Policy of Scoil Aonghusa

Cahir Road
Cashel
Co.Tipperary

Roll number: 19615S

School Patron/s: Tipperary Association for Special Needs (TASN)

1. Introduction

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

The policy was approved by the school patron on 24.09.2024. 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 **Scoil Aonghusa** admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

- *Scoil Aonghusa is a co-educational special school under the Department of Education and Skills and the patronage of The Tipperary Association for Special Needs (TASN).*
- *Scoil Aonghusa caters for the needs of pupils aged 4-18 years with a diagnosis of;*
 - (i) Moderate General Learning Disabilities*
 - (ii) Severe to Profound General Learning Difficulties*
 - (iii) Multiple disabilities including a learning disability and co-morbidity*
 - (iv) A confirmed diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder with a moderate or severe GLD.*

- *Scoil Aonghusa has the provision of one Early Intervention class for young children aged 3-5 years. Pupils attending this class must have a confirmed diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder according to the DSM V.*
- *The chief concern of Scoil Aonghusa is the child.*
- *In Scoil Aonghusa we are committed to developing each child's full potential in a caring, stimulating, positive and supportive environment. This means taking into account his/her physical, emotional, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual well-being.*
- *The school will support the child to access an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum*
- *The school will take into account the individual difference of each child as well as his/her particular environment.*
- *The school will foster and nurture the child's sense of belonging to family, church school and the wider community.*
- *The school will endeavour to prepare the pupil for as independent and capable an adult as the potential allows.*
- *Scoil Aonghusa encourages the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and invites everyone to participate and to contribute. All children are welcome to enrol regardless of race, religion, gender, family status, disability or cultural difference.*
- *The ethos of Scoil Aonghusa is a Christian one and the school reflects individuality.*

3. Admission Statement

Scoil Aonghusa will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) *the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,*
- (b) *the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,*
- (c) *the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,*
- (d) *the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,*
- (e) *the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,*
- (f) *the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,*
- (g) *the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,*
- (h) *the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or*
- (i) *the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs*

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'gender ground', 'civil status ground', 'family status ground', 'sexual orientation ground', 'religion ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'ground of race' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

- **Scoil Aonghusa** will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.
- **Scoil Aonghusa** will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

Special School

Scoil Aonghusa is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

Scoil Aonghusa with the approval of the Minister for Education, provides an education exclusively for students with;

➤ Moderate General Learning Disability

A pupil with a moderate general learning disability is likely to display significant delay in reaching developmental milestones. These pupils may have impaired development and learning ability in respect of basic literacy and numeracy, language and communication, mobility and leisure skills, motor co-ordination and social and personal development.

Many pupils with moderate general learning disabilities may have difficulties with the length of time for which they can concentrate on activities, with generalising and transferring knowledge across situations and with processing input from more than one sense at a time.

Insofar as IQ (Intelligence Quotient) may be used as an indicator of moderate general learning disability, such pupils' cognitive functioning's range from IQ 35 to 50 on standardised IQ tests. Many pupils may have accompanying impairments such as physical, hearing or visual impairment, autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) and emotional disturbance or impairment in communication

skills. Remember that each pupil is different – what works for one may not work for another.

➤ **Severe to Profound GLD**

Pupils with severe to profound general learning disabilities are likely to be severely impaired in their functioning in respect of a basic awareness and understanding of themselves, of the people around them and of the world they live in.

Many of these pupils will have additional disabilities such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs), challenging and/or self-injurious behaviour, emotional disturbance, epilepsy, hearing impairment, physical impairment, severe impairment in communication skills and visual impairment. Insofar as IQ (Intelligence Quotient) may be used as an indicator of general learning disability,

A pupil with a severe general learning disability is described as having an IQ in the range 20 to 35 on standardised IQ tests, and a

A pupil with a profound general learning disability is described as having an IQ under 20.

Pupils with severe to profound general learning disabilities exhibit a wide and diverse range of characteristics, including a dependence on others to satisfy basic needs such as feeding and toileting, difficulties in mobility, problems with generalising skills from one situation to another, significant delays in reaching developmental milestones and significant speech and/or communication difficulties. Some pupils may have associated behavioural problems. Pupils may have limited communication skills and will therefore not have control of the multiple means by which other students communicate such as speech, body language, facial expressions and print. Each pupil is an individual what works for one may not work for another.

➤ **Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological, developmental disorder which effects how people with ASD communicate, socialise and interact with others. It is also characterised by restrictive, repetitive behaviours, interests and activities.

Pupils with a diagnosis of ASD should have an IQ score within the range of categories that the school caters for.

Scoil Aonghusa will consider pupils with an IQ score in the range of 50 to 69 taking into account the level and degree of severity of their Autism symptoms and the ability of the school to provide an appropriate education for the individual pupil.

This criteria also applies to pupils attending the Early Intervention Class – Aonghusa Beag.

Note for schools: The act does not require schools and special classes providing for a category or categories of special educational needs to change their current status. The current arrangements in relation to the category or categories of special educational needs provided by schools will continue as in previous years unless otherwise directed by the NCSE or the Department.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

Special School

Scoil Aonghusa provides an education exclusively for students with *Scoil Aonghusa with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with;*

- (i) *Moderate General Learning Disabilities - IQ 35 to 50 on standardised IQ tests.*
- (ii) *Severe to Profound General Learning Difficulties - IQ in the range 20 to 35 on standardised IQ tests to IQ under 20.*
- (iii) *Multiple disabilities including a learning disability and co-morbidity*
- (iv) *A confirmed diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder together with either a moderate GLD or a severe/profound GLD*

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.

6. Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

Priority of Applications.

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

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

- (i) The diagnosis which the student has and intellectual functioning in the Moderate General Learning Disability or Severe to Profound GLD range as stated on a psychological report dated within two years of the student's application which deems the applicant eligible for a place in Scoil Aonghusa.*
- (ii) The age of the student 3-5 years for Aonghusa Beag Early Intervention Class or 4- 18 years for the main section of Scoil Aonghusa*
- (iii) The current capacity of the school to meet the pupil's educational needs in an appropriate class setting that is either a class designated for students with a Moderate GLD General Learning with a pupil teacher ratio of 8:1 or a class designated for pupils with a Severe to Profound GLD with a pupil ratio of 6:1, or an Autistic Spectrum Disorder class with a pupil teacher ratio of 6:1.*
- (iv) The pupil's address in relation to being within the catchment area of the school for application for school transport.*
- (v) The availability of any other school placement or none.*

*The availability of a place in a classroom suitable to the age of the child
The student and /or parental choice in relation to attending Scoil Aonghusa.*

- (vi) The physical and human resources of the school available on application*
- (vii) The needs of the whole school at the time of application*
- (viii) The health and safety requirements of the existing student cohort.*
- (ix) The health and safety requirements of the staff.*

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

6.2 *In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places) the following arrangements will apply:*

Priority criteria ;

** Children who have siblings or step-siblings already enrolled in the school.*

**Aonghusa Beag pre-school students seeking enrolment in the main body of the school will have priority over students who have attended other preschools.*

**children who reside within our catchment area that is nearest to our school geographically.*

**child who is oldest in age (that is first born).*

6.3 *Finally in the event that two or more children who are applicants for a place are still tied for a place having the same entitlement, the Board of Management will review each application and the Board shall arrange for a child's name to 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 name picked will be offered the place.*

(i) 6.4 Unsuccessful applicants whose applications are ranked with the same marks will be placed on the current year waiting list for the designated class (MGLD/ S/P or ASD) in order that they were 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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

*(a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at
(I) an early intervention class, or
(II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;*

*(b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
(other than in relation to a fee charging school or a plc or further education and training course run by a school in respect of those courses)*

(c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
 (other than in relation to:

- admission to (a) a special school or (b) a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and/or
- admission to an Irish language school, in accordance with the provisions of section 62(9) of the act

(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;
 (other than in the case of admission to the residential element of a boarding school or to a plc or further education and training course run by a school)

(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;
 (Other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

(g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.
This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to *Scoil Aonghusa* will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see section 15 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 16 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

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

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

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

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 18 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Scoil Aonghusa 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 Scoil Aonghusa where;

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.*
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.*
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or*
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 10 above.*

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

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

*In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to **Scoil Aonghusa** were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.*

*Placement on the waiting list of **Scoil Aonghusa** is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.*

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

14. Late Applications

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

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

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:

- As **Scoil Aonghusa** is a special school the age range of pupils applying may not always be at the junior school level. Pupils may often seek admission due requiring a special school placement having attended mainstream or a

special class within mainstream. The availability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils at post primary level is often a factor.

- *Scoil Aonghusa will consider applications at any stage from 5 to 18 years provided the pupil has a diagnosis appropriate to the schools criteria.*
- *Applications are treated on the basis of application to a particular class*
- *As previously stated in Section 6 the availability of a space in the particular class and the ability of the school to meet the needs of the pupil at that time is taken into consideration when decision is being made.*

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 during the academic year will be considered in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education (admissions to school) Act 2018 and any regulations made under the Act.*
- *In exceptional cases an application for admission will be considered and processed during the school year should there not be applicants on the waiting list*
- *The application will be based on the following;*
 - (i) *Consideration of appropriate diagnosis an Psychology reports and recommendations*
 - (ii) *Availability of a place in appropriate class setting at the time of application*
 - (iii) *Lack of an appropriate or alternative school placement*
 - (iv) *The suitability of the educational programmes to meet the need of the pupil and expectations of the parents*
 - (v) *Consideration of school's resources to meet the need of the pupil at the time of application*
 - (vi) *The health, safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff in the school*

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of (name of school) or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

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

Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, 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 student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

- (i) Scoil Aonghusa is a multi-denominational school where all beliefs, faiths, Religions and those of none are respected and welcomed*
- (ii) Preparation for the sacraments for First Holy Communion and Confirmation are offered if requested by parents but these sacraments are not compulsory.*
- (iii) All pupils who wish to receive the sacraments will prepare as an individual group and other pupils not receiving the sacraments will continue with their daily activities within their own classroom.*
- (iv) We note that this arrangement will not result in the reduction of the school day or in any pupils teaching and learning time being reduced*

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, 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.

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.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note:

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

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.

Right of appeal

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.

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.

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.

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)

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) 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.

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.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed and monitored by the Board of Management of Scoil Aonghusa on an annual basis or when and if the need arises.

This policy is a collaborative document and will be provided to the school community through our school website or in hard copy on request.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on;

Date: 24.09.2024

Signed: Donal Benny.



Developing Ability

Diminishing Disability

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