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## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

### **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 7 July 2020. It is published on the school's website (from 1 Sept 2020) and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for GETNS's admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

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

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

***Important Temporary notice re. Waiting List for 2021 and subsequent years  
NB: Transition Period (September 2020 - September 2024)***

Prior to the coming into operation of section 62(11) of the Education Act 1998, on 1 Feb 2020, inserted by Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, GETNS had confirmed, in writing, to applicants that the name of the child had been placed on a pre-enrolment list for the relevant school year. This applies up to the school year starting September 2023. Places on these pre-enrolment lists are still valid. Therefore for enrolment in 21/22; 22/23; 23/24, applicants from the relevant pre-enrolment lists will be offered places according to the old system, honouring the previous enrolment policy, at the time of application. In the event that there are places available thereafter, these will be offered according to the categories outlined in this policy in respect of applications made during the annual admissions process (beginning in October 2020).

## Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Like all Educate Together schools, GETNS is committed to the values laid down in Educate Together's Charter. As an Educate Together school, GETNS provides for equality of access. Our school is learner-centred, equality-based, co-educational and democratically-run. This means that all members of the school community, whatever their social, cultural or belief background, work together in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Students follow an Ethical Education curriculum, learning about morality and spirituality; equality and justice; belief systems and an ethical approach to the environment. It teaches students about different belief systems as well as atheism, agnosticism and humanism, without promoting any one worldview over another. Our equality-based objective informs all policies and practices in the daily life of the school. In exercising this policy making and decision-making responsibilities, the school's Board of Management upholds the characteristic spirit of the school.

In line with the Educate Together Charter, GETNS offers places to siblings enrolled in the school at the same time, in the first instance.

The definition of a sibling in this policy includes step siblings and foster siblings who are enrolled in the school at the same time. It does not include relatives or someone who cohabits with a currently-enrolled pupil.

## 2. Admission Statement

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

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

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

### **3. Categories of Additional Educational Needs catered for in the special class**

GETNS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

### **4. Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where:

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 and 8 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;
- c) a student is less than 4 years of age on the 1 September of the school year concerned/before they start school.
- d) in relation to application for admission to a special class, GETNS provides an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

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

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act 1998, 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, 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;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to:  
admission to 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
- (d) the occupation (including children of staff), 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 other than siblings of students who are enrolled in the school at the same time,
- (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.

**Transition period:** Offers of places will be made in the first instance where places on the lists were confirmed to applicants prior to February 2020, based on the priority category of the policy at the time of application, up until September 2024 only.

## 6. Oversubscription

The annual admission process for each of the three sections below will open for at least three weeks, starting after 1 October. The annual admission notice will be published at least 1 week prior to the start of the annual admission process on the school's website.

### a) Junior Infants

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 for Junior Infants. Siblings are prioritised and then age, to take account of the two years of ECCE scheme. Priority is given to children who have reached 4 years of age on or before 31 March of the calendar year they start school.

NB: 'enrolled in the school at the same time' does not include the case where a sibling in a higher class would finish school before the applicant would start; that older sibling would become a past-pupil, which offers no priority advantage under the policy. So, the sibling of a child in sixth class who is applying to enrol in junior infants the following year would not have priority on the basis of being the older child's sibling. Only children with siblings who will be enrolled in the school at the same time should be given priority in offering places.

Priority Category 1 - Applicant students who:

- are siblings of children enrolled in the school at the same time; and
- will have reached 4 years of age by 31 March in the calendar year that they start school

Priority Category 2 - Applicant students who:

- will have reached 4 years of age by 31 March in the calendar year that they start school

Priority Category 3: Applicant students who

- are siblings of children enrolled in the school at the same time; and
- will have reached 4 years of age by 31 May in the calendar year that they start school

Priority Category 4 - Applicant students who:

- will have reached 4 years of age by 31 May in the calendar year that they start school

### **Lottery**

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the categories above (and the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), places will be offered by way of a **lottery** of completed applications.

Multiple births such as twins, triplets, etc will be entered in the lottery as one entry and will be offered a place/placed on the waiting list in sequence of alphabetical order of their first name.

All unsuccessful applicants will be kept on a waiting list for the duration of the school year, in case of a place becoming available during the year. In this event the same procedure will be followed as per categories above.

### **b) Special class**

If a special class is oversubscribed the school will apply the following selection criteria to applicant students. These will be applied in the order listed below to applications received within the timeline as set out in the school's annual admission notice for the special class. The child must have a recommendation for the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

Priority Category 1 - Applicant students who:

- are already enrolled in the school

Priority Category 2 - Applicant students who:

- are siblings of children enrolled in the school at the same time; and
- will have reached 4 years of age by 31 March in the calendar year that they start school

Priority Category 3 - Applicant students who:

- will have reached 4 years of age by 31 March in the calendar year that they start school

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), places will be offered by way of a lottery of completed applications. All unsuccessful applicants will be kept on a waiting list for the duration of the school year, in case of a place becoming available during the year.

### **c) Other year groups - Senior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class**

If the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission to Senior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class, apply selection criteria in the order listed below. Applications must be received as set out in the school's annual admission notice for other year groups. Students must be moving to the next year group if the application is for September, or to the same year if applying to move during the school year:

Priority Category 1- Applicant students who:

- are siblings of children enrolled in the school at the same time

Priority Category 2 - All other applicant students

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), places will be offered by way of a lottery or added to a waiting list for the duration of that school year.

## **7. Late Applications**

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice for Junior Infants, a special class or other year groups will be considered and decided upon in date order of when they were received in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application not later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place, the the applicant will be added to the waiting list.

If two applications are received at the same time, on the same date priority will be based on earliest date of birth.

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

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available in Junior Infants, a special class or other year groups, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to GETNS 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 GETNS 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 (see section 6 above). Late applications will be added to the list in date order (see section 7 above).

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

Waiting lists will expire at the end of each school year.

## **9. Admissions of students after the commencement of the school year**

If a place is available after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, the place will be offered to the next place on the waiting list if there is one or to the next application.

## **10. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to GETNS will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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

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.



## **11. Notifying applicants of decisions**

Applicants will be informed as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the relevant annual admissions notice but no later than three weeks after the annual admissions process or for late applications, three weeks after the school receives an application.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated 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 or class concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 16 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from GETNS 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.

## **13. 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 GETNS 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 12 above.



## 14. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66 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 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 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)

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

The board of GETNS 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.

## 16. 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 and Skills.

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

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

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 and Skills.

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.

## **17. Data Protection**

The school acknowledges its obligations as a data controller under the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Information obtained for the purposes of allocating places in the school to students will only be used and disclosed in a manner which is compatible with this purpose. Only such personal data as are relevant and necessary for the performance of this function will be retained. The school undertakes to ensure that such information is processed fairly, that it is kept safe, secure, accurate, complete, and up to date. Individuals have the right to have any inaccurate information rectified or erased. All data submitted as part of the admissions process will be destroyed within twelve months of the end of the school year the application is for (as opposed to the receipt of the application). A copy of all personal data obtained and kept as part of the admissions process will be made

available to the subject of such data on receipt of a written request to the chairperson of the board of management.

## **19. Ratification and Review**

- This policy was ratified by the BoM on 2 July 2020
- It is scheduled for review in January 2022
- Educate Together, as patron, approved the manner of this policy's publication on 7 July 2020