

## Admission Policy of Ardfinnan N.S.



**School Address: Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. E91 X6F9**

**Roll number: 16077B**

**School Patron/s: Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan,  
Diocese of Waterford and Lismore**

### 1. Introduction

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

The policy was approved by the school patron on **14<sup>th</sup> September 2020**. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

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

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

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

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

**Ardfinnan N.S.** is a Catholic **co-educational** primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan of the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore.

"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:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) 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 **Ardfinnan N.S.** 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.

This policy is linked to other relevant policies within the school and in particular our Code of Discipline and Behaviour.

#### School Ethos:

*As a staff, we are committed to the creation of a warm and friendly atmosphere in the school where there is a sense of good order and an atmosphere conducive to learning.*

*The school promotes a Christian Ethos where respect, tolerance and fairness are promoted.*

*Our aim is to create a secure environment to ensure everyone's well being and safety and to maintain a happy, harmonious, working school so that our pupils may develop socially, personally, spiritually, emotionally, creatively, and academically to their fullest potential.*

### 3. Admission Statement

**Ardfinnan N.S.** will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,



- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

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

Ardfinnan N.S. 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.

Ardfinnan N.S. 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."

#### **All denominational schools**

**Ardfinnan N.S.** is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

*Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.*

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

**Ardfinnan N.S.** is a school which has established two classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified (see [section 5](#)).

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

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

**Ardfinnan N.S.** with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autism.

Our ASD Class aims to offer an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational national school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream activities as appropriate.

#### **(b) In the case of a mainstream class**

Effective provision for pupils with special educational needs within mainstream admissions in **Ardfinnan N.S.** is situated within an inclusive whole-school framework which



emphasises effective teaching and learning for all and good collaboration and engagement between schools, parents/guardians and pupils. Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in Special Educational Needs A Continuum of Support, 2007.

The Board of Management of **Ardfinnan N.S** will ensure that Section 2 of the EPSEN Act 2004 is complied with whereby

“A child with special needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with –

- a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or
- b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated”.

Parents must provide the school with **all** relevant reports and documentation that will allow the school to provide adequate support for a child who has Special Educational Needs.

**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 discipline and 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

### All denominational schools

**Ardfinnan N.S.** is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

*Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.*

### School with special education class(es)

The special class attached to **Ardfinnan N.S.** provides an education exclusively for students with Autism and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

The criteria for the admission of students to the special education class for students with Autism is as follows:



1. A Pre-enrolment form for the ASD class must be completed by the parents/guardians on behalf of the student.
2. An up to date psychological assessment (within 2 years of date of application) to include: a statement of diagnosis, current level of cognitive functioning and a clear recommendation for a special class placement within a mainstream school.
3. The student must have a primary diagnosis of Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder without significant intellectual impairment made using the DSM-IV or V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or team. If the child also presents with a general learning disability, it must be in the mild range.
4. An original birth certificate (which will be copied and returned)
5. A Speech & Language report (if available).
6. An Occupational Therapy report (if available).
7. Any other relevant reports or documentation.

*The board of management of Ardfinnan N.S. has a duty of care to ensure, as far as practicable, the safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school which that board has responsibility.*

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the

- (j) health and safety of the applicant
- or
- (ii) students and staff of the school
- or
- (iii) risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

## **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:

### **Mainstream Admission:**

1. Brother and Sisters of existing and former pupils.
2. Children living within the parish.
3. Children of staff members.
4. Children of past pupils living locally.
5. Children living within the agreed catchment area.
6. Children living outside the catchment area. Distance from the school, as measured by Google maps.
7. If spaces are still available, places will be allocated as per waiting list, once an assessment has been made by the Admissions team.

### **Special Class Admission:**

1. Pupils already enrolled in Ardfinnan N.S. who meet the admissions criteria for ASD special class.

*\*Please note: Where there is a waiting list, enrolment into mainstream does not equal automatic entitlement to ASD special classes or to access services of the ASD class even*



where a child who is enrolled in mainstream meets the admissions criteria for the special class enrolment.

2. Brother and Sisters of existing and former pupils
3. Children living within the parish.
4. Children of staff members.
5. Children of past pupils living locally.
6. Children living within the agreed catchment area.
7. Children living outside the catchments area. Distance from the school, as measured by Google Maps.

If spaces are still available, places will be allocated as per waiting list by random selection of applicants working through the short listing criteria outlined in 7 and 8 below:

8. Children from Tipperary South HSE area with no ASD special class placement
9. Children from Tipperary South HSE area who already have an ASD special class placement

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:

**Eircode will be used to calculate which child is the nearest to the school.** Priority will be provided in accordance with the above criteria and as determined by the BOM.

## 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 place 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## 8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to **Ardfinnan N.S.** will be based on the following:

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

(Please see [section 14](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#) below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

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

## 9. Notifying applicants of decisions

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

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of

the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

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

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

In accepting an offer of admission from **Ardfinnan N.S.**, 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 **Ardfinnan N.S.** 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.
- (v) The applicant has not provided all of the required documentation.

In addition to these, the Board of Management reserves the right to refuse admission or rescind an offer of enrolment to any child in exceptional circumstances. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

- (i) The child has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet the needs of the child and/or provide the student with an appropriate education
- (ii) In the opinion of the Board of management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property

## 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 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**

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 **Ardfinnan N.S.** 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 **Ardfinnan N.S.** 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

## 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 prior to the start of the school year who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:**

Students will be offered a place if a place is available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in [Section 13](#).

**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:**

Admission applications received after the commencement of the school year will be offered a place if they have moved into the school catchment area (radius 4.5km) provided a place is available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in [Section 13](#).

Junior Infants, with the exception of junior infant students transferring from another school into the catchment area, may only be admitted to the school prior to 30th September of each academic school year.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of **Ardfinnan N.S.** 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.

**Note:** 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:**

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



request may be accommodated by the school.

## **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 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.

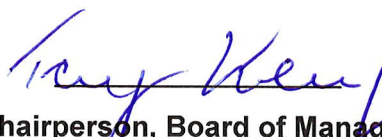
## 19. Implementation and Review

This Policy will be reviewed, as deemed necessary, by the Board of Management.

## 20. Policy Ratification


The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Ardfinnan N.S. on 14/12/22.

Signed:

  
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date:

14/12/22

  
(Principal)

The contents of this policy have been approved by the Board acting on behalf of the Patron on 21/2/2023.