

ST. DYMPHNA'S SPECIAL SCHOOL

ROLL NUMBER 19387I

Admissions and Participation Policy For entry in September 2023/2024 Academic Year

Updated 21st December 2022

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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.

2. The policy was approved by the school patron on 20/12/2022 and applies to all applications received after that date. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

3. The relevant dates and timelines for the St. Dymphna'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.

4. This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual Admission Notice for the school year in question.

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

6. Decisions in relation to admissions will be taken by the Principal. Disappointed applicants can request a review of these decisions by the Board of Management and/or appeal same under Section 29 of the Education Act in accordance with section 18 of this Policy.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Dymphna's Special School caters for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The school welcomes applications for admission to the school for any child who on assessment is found to be functioning within the above range of intellectual disability and that this intellectual disability is her/his primary special educational need. The school also welcomes applications for admission of any child who, in addition to a diagnosed mild intellectual disability, has one or more diagnosed additional disabilities (for example, autism, ADHD, dysphasia, epilepsy, etc.).

2. The school provides an educational service to children residing in North County Mayo and West County Sligo.

3. Any applicant for whom St. Dymphna's is not the nearest Special school catering for children with mild GLD to their home address is unlikely to receive sanction for school transport from the Department of Education. This is not a matter that we look at during the admissions process and is not something that the school has any control over. Parents/Guardians should note this however as school transport is often a precondition in allowing parents to send children to the school and additional resources may not be sanctioned by the NCSE if there is a place and sufficient resources at a closer school. We require parents to confirm on the Application form that either St. Dymphna's is the closest special school catering for children with Mild GLD or that it is not the closest such special school, and the parents will be responsible for transporting their child to school each day.

4. The selection of students for admission and discharge is decided by the Principal of the school. This Admissions and Participation policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Admissions to Schools Act) 2018 in order to assist parents in relation to admission matters. The manner in which decisions regarding admissions are taken are set out in the admission procedure (Section 5). These decisions are contingent on the availability of a suitable vacancy relevant to the educational and/or medical needs and age of an applicant.

5. The maximum class size in St. Dymphna's Special School varies from 6 to 11 students, depending on what needs the students in a particular class may have. Class sizes may also be smaller depending on the number of students within a class presenting with co-morbid disorders, autism, or other additional needs.

School capacity varies according to the needs of the children we are catering for at a particular time.

6. Applicants should note that the availability of a place in the school will be dependent on the level of needs of each applicant. For example, although there may be two places available in a particular class grouping, if a child is enrolled with very high needs, or if the child requires large or physically bulky equipment, we may be only able to accommodate one child instead of two in that particular classroom.

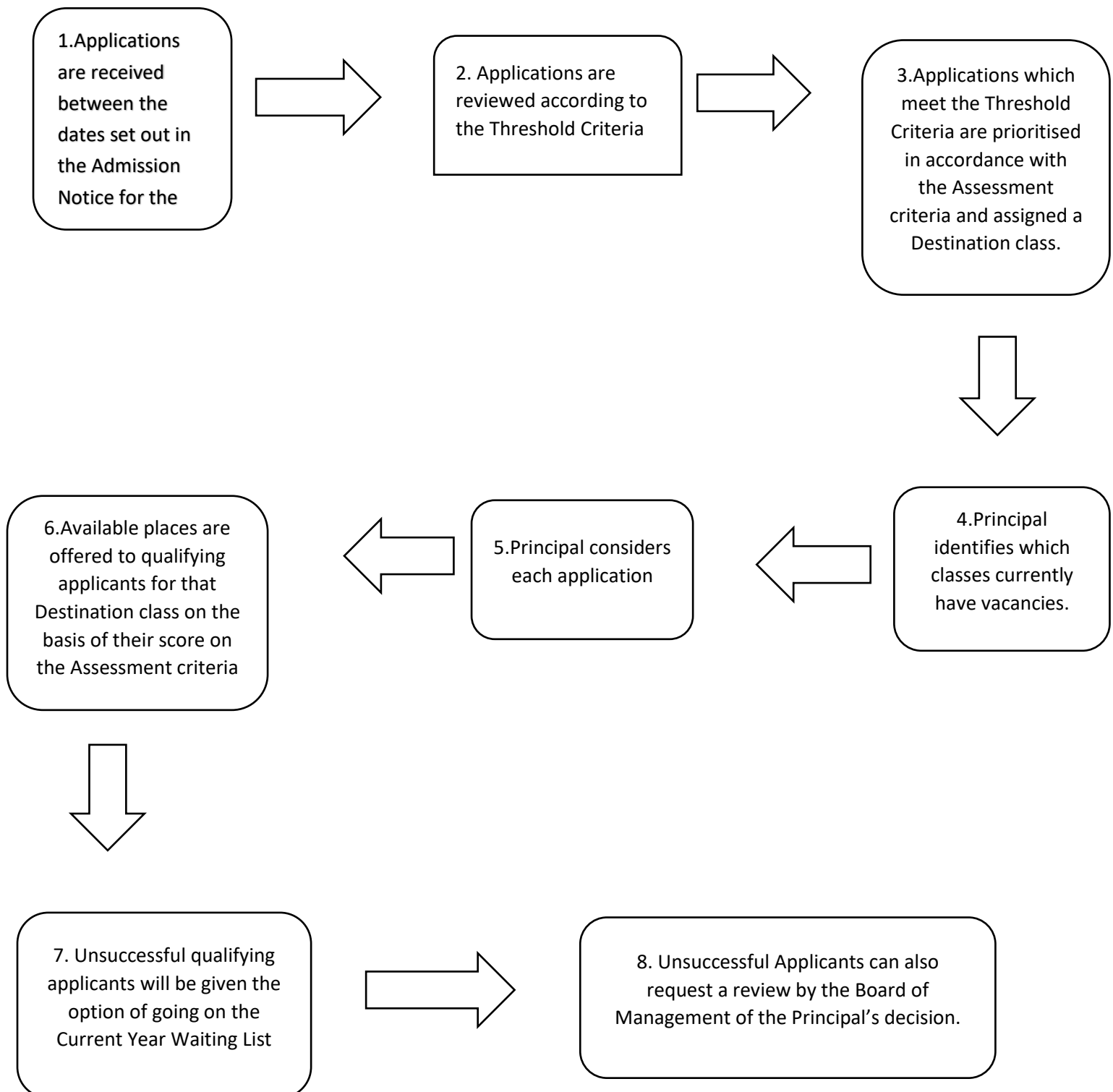
7. As explained below in more detail, applications are treated as applications for particular classes. At an early stage of the application process, a child is assigned to a particular destination class based on the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities, and any other special educational needs of relevance. Class groupings vary from year to year as students leave the school or move to other schools.

8. Parents should note that personal data concerning applications is shared with the NCSE. The lawful basis and extent of this data sharing is more fully described in the School's Data Protection policy.

9. Applicants should note that the school does not have a school nurse and the school has been unable to secure nursing support to date.

10. Outline of St. Dymphna's Special School admission process: this flow chart is meant as a summary guide only and is not meant to take the place of a close reading of the text of this policy.

SUMMARY OF ADMISSIONS PROCESS



Applications which do not meet the Threshold Criteria set out below will be refused and the applicant will be notified of this and of their right to request a review under Section 18 of this Policy.

3. Admission Statement

1. Each child is considered as an individual. The Board of Management strives to ensure that every child accepted into the St. Dymphna's Special 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 and upholding 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.
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.
3. In accordance with Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998, this policy sets out St. Dymphna's Special School's policy on the admission of students and their participation in the school.
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 (subject to Section 3.5 below)
5. St. Dymphna'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 with a certain category of special educational needs, that being students who have a 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 needs will not constitute discrimination.

6. This policy aims to uphold the moral, spiritual, physical, and psychological welfare and constitutional rights of all persons concerned.

7. Places in the school are allotted each September to applicants who meet the Threshold Criteria in order of priority to those applicants who are rated highest on the Assessment Criteria set out in section 6 below

8. St. Dymphna's Special School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation 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.

9. St. Dymphna's Special School) will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

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

1. St. Dymphna'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 a mild learning disability.

5. Admission of Students and Admissions Process

1. General Principle

St. Dymphna's Special School provides 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. Dymphna's Special 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.

2. Overview of Application and Admissions Process

1. Parents/guardians are requested to contact the school to obtain an Application Form from the school office or download one from the school's website. The form is also available at the end of this policy. 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 school year of entry during the period set out in the annual Admissions Notice. 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. Some classes are substantially over-subscribed, and it is not fair to those who applied in time if applications are received outside that period.

2. Please note Applications are accepted each year for the following September during the applications window detailed in the annual Admissions 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 before the applications window opens can be appealed in accordance with the procedure set out at Section 18 below and parents will be notified of this.

3. Please note that as St. Dymphna's Special School is a special school, it does not have a particular intake group as many mainstream schools do. In our school, we accept applications from children aged at least 5 years of age

on the 1st January of the year of entry and who have not reached 18 years of age on the 31st August of the year of entry. Applications are treated as applications for particular classes. At an early stage of the application process, a child is assigned to a particular destination class based on the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities, and any other special educational needs of relevance. Class groupings vary from year to year as students leave the school or move to other schools.

4. Applications are considered by the Principal and places will be offered or refused by the Principal. Appeals/requests for review in relation to any decision by the Principal to refuse a place must be taken in accordance with Section 18 of this Policy. As noted below in Section 8, the Principal/Board of Management may appoint an Admissions Committee to advise in relation to any application received.

5. Please note that subject to the school **not** being **oversubscribed** (i.e., that there are places available in the destination 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.

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. Such a visit will not give their child any priority and is solely to allow the parents inform themselves better about the school. Before visiting, parents/guardians are advised to review this policy to ensure that their child comes within the Threshold Criteria in Section 5.7 below.

4. *Who can make an Application?*

St. Dymphna's Special 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.

5. *Steps in the Application and Admissions Process*

The following procedure will apply to all applications for placement in the School:

- (a) Parents/guardians download a copy of the Admissions and Participation Policy and Application Form from the school website or obtain it from the School Office;
- (b) Parents are asked to return the following:
 - i. Completed Application form;
 - ii. Full birth certificate;
 - iii. Two Proofs of Address e.g., utility bill; household bill, etc.
 - iv. Recent psychological assessment report from no more than 2 years before the date of application (which must contain a recommendation from the Psychologist that the child should attend a Special School for children with mild learning disabilities);

- v. Up to date reports from the child's present school/pre-school (from within the last 12 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 36 months such as:
- Psychiatric Assessment,
 - Speech & Language Assessment,
 - Occupational Therapy Report,
 - Social Work Report
 - Doctors/consultants reports outlining medical needs specific to the child
 - **N.B All above reports should be from within 3 years of the date of application**
 - Support Plan/Individual Education Plan from previous school
 - Behaviour Support Plan from previous school
 - Any formal testing results from previous school
- (c) Following receipt of the Application form and submitted materials, the Principal will determine the allocation of places, as per the criteria as set out below. Each applicant will be assigned a destination class based on the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special educational needs of relevance. If **all** the documents listed at 5.5 (b)(i)- (vi) are not included with the application, the application will be deemed incomplete. Applications will be checked on receipt and if they are not complete or if they do not enclose all the documents required, the application will be returned to the child's parents/guardians and will not be considered.
- (d) If it is decided 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 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 child has not been accepted for admission, the parents of the child will also be informed within 21 days and will be provided with reasons for non-admission as per Section 9 below. If the child has been accepted for admission, the school will then inform the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the decision and will seek its approval for the placement and its sanction for school transport arrangement. This process may take 4 to 6 weeks.
- (e) Parents/guardians will be requested to respond to the offer of a place by a specified date, usually within 10 days of the making of the offer of the place (failure to respond by that date will result in the offer lapsing). In accepting the place parents must return to the school the completed application forms including the NCSE school transport and SNA support forms, if applicable;
- (f) If the child meets the Threshold Criteria below but admission is refused due to lack of capacity in the destination class, 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.
- (g) 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.

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:

1. Where possible, enrolment should take place at the beginning of the school year. In exceptional cases, 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 particular class.
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 application will be considered on its merits and in light of the places available in the different classes in the school.
3. Siblings of students in the school are not automatically entitled to a place in the school
4. Please note that **all reports** relating to a child which have been drafted by a psychologist, psychiatrist, behavioural therapist, paediatrician, or other relevant medical practitioner (who has produced a report relating to the child's cognitive development, learning ability or educational development) within **the three years** preceding application **must** be provided to the school for assessment. These reports are essential to facilitate the school to best assess the child's needs. The withholding of reports may invalidate an Admission Application at any time. If, after admission, it later becomes apparent that reports or relevant information have 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.

7. *Consideration of applications* - Applications for admission to St. Dymphna's Special School will only be considered where a child meets all of the following SIX criteria:

Threshold Criteria for Consideration of Application:

1. The child is in the cognitive range for students with mild general learning disabilities i.e., has a full-scale IQ of between 50 and 70 (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application) and therefore has the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered in the school.
2. The child is in the adaptive range for a child with mild learning disabilities (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application) and therefore has the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered in the school.
3. The application form is fully completed and includes all enclosures appropriate to the application.
4. The child is at least 5 years old on the 1st January of the year of entry and has not reached their 18th birthday on the 31st of August of the year of entry;
5. There is sufficient physical space in the destination classroom and the appropriate class for that child has not reached full capacity (i.e., that the class is not oversubscribed). Parents

should note that just because a child is assigned to a particular destination class, this does not mean that there is a vacancy in that class, merely that the destination class is suitable for the child in light of the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special educational needs of relevance.

6. The documentation enclosed with the Application includes a recommendation from an appropriate professional that the child should be admitted to a Special School for children with mild learning disabilities.

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:

1. The child 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 child with an appropriate education;
2. The school is of the view that the child poses an unacceptable risk to self or other pupils, to school staff or to school property.
3. The child has previously been expelled from St. Dymphna's Special School or any other school in circumstances where the Principal/Board of Management feels that placement in St. Dymphna's Special School would not be appropriate for the child.
4. The child has a primary diagnosis of an Emotional or Behaviour Disorder. St. Dymphna's is not designated as an EBD school and cannot accept applications for children whose primary diagnosis is an EBD or is EBD related.

6. Oversubscription

1. Priority Of Applications

Where the destination class is oversubscribed, places will be offered each September to applicants who meet the Threshold Criteria according to the following principles:

1. First Priority for any places in each destination class will be given to those applicants who meet the Threshold Criteria based on a marking of their application on the following Assessment Criteria.

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:

1. The extent to which the child would benefit from a place in the school, given the child's primary needs, age and educational history, taking into account any other needs the child may have, for example, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Fragile X, ADD/ADHD, emotional behavioural disorder, physical and sensory disabilities, and medical conditions (rated out of 20)
2. The availability of expertise within the school to deal with any other needs the child may have, for example, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Fragile X, ADD/ADHD, emotional behavioural disorder, physical

and sensory disabilities, and medical conditions (including the child's need for a nurse – which the school does not currently have) (rated out of 10).

3. Siblings of children who are already currently enrolled within the school (based on number of such siblings and whether they are currently enrolled in the school) (rated out of 10).

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. 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 likely to be rare but it is within the discretion of the Board to limit class size where required for safety or educational reasons.

3. If there is no place available for the child in the destination class then the application will be refused, and the child's parents/guardians will be asked if they wish their child to be listed on the Waiting List.

4. If there is a place available in a particular destination class and there are a number of applicants for the same place, then each such application will be ranked in accordance with their marks from the Assessment Criteria above and applicants will be offered any available places based on their marking on these criteria.

5. In the event of two or more children who are candidates for the same place having the same marks, the children's names will be ranked in order of date of birth of the applicant (with the older applicants being prioritised over the younger ones) and the first such name will be offered the place. Unsuccessful applicants whose applications are graded with the same marks will be placed on the Waiting List for the destination class in the order of the oldest child being first.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account/No consideration or account will be given to the following

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, including naíonraí,

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. Dymphna'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 with the exception of a student's sibling currently attending the school;

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

8. Decisions on applications

1. The decision in relation to each application will be taken by the Principal on the basis of the criteria set out above. Appeals in relation to same must be taken in accordance with Section 18 of this Policy.

2. The Principal/Board of Management shall have the power to appoint an Admissions Committee to assist in and advise on the assessment of applications. Any such Admissions Committee which is admitted will have an advisory function only and members will be appointed from staff within the School.

3. All decisions on applications for admission to St. Dymphna'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

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" (as noted elsewhere, we do not have an intake group).

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

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

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

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. Dymphna's Special School, you must indicate within 10 days—

(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 Principal or Board of Management of St. Dymphna'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.
- 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 Tusla (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

1. *Waiting List*

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 school is refusing to enrol the child in a particular class due to there being no places available in that class, the parents will be asked if they wish their child be placed on the Waiting List.
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.**
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 and Participation Policy.
4. The child will be listed on the Waiting List only in respect of the class for which his/her application was considered and each child will be listed on the Waiting List in the order of their marking according to the Assessment

Criteria. If a place becomes available during the Academic Year in the destination class, the place will be offered first to qualifying children in the order they are listed on the the Waiting List for that class and only after that to children who make Mid-Year Applications.

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.

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. As with applications received before the Closing Date, late applications will be subject to the Threshold Criteria referred to above. If a late application fulfils the Threshold Criteria above but there is not a place in the relevant destination, the child will be added to the end of the Waiting List for the relevant destination class.

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

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. Dymphna's 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 particular destination class based on the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special educational needs of relevance. Class groupings vary from year to year as students leave the school or move to other schools.

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. As most classes are full each September, mid-year applications will most likely be waitlisted (assuming they meet the Threshold Criteria referred to above) for the destination class in question. If there is no place in the relevant destination class, qualifying mid-year applications (i.e., those who meet the Threshold Criteria above) will be added to the end of the Waiting List for the relevant destination class.

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

The Board of Management of St. Dymphna'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-

- 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 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:

St. Dymphna's Special School is a non-denominational school. While we do not provide formal religious instruction, at the request of parents, we do prepare Catholic children for First Communion and Confirmation. Alternate arrangements are put in place for those students who are not participating in these Programmes and there is no reduction in their school day. Prayers are also said in assembly and at lunchtime and there is a school Mass at Christmas and at the end of the school year.

Alternative arrangements are put in place for pupils not attending school masses without any reduction in the school day.

18. Reviews/appeals

1. Timeline for reviews/appeals

1. Parents should note the strict timelines in relation to requesting a review by the Board of Management. Any request for a review of a decision of the Principal to refuse admission must be made within 21 days of the date of the decision to refuse admission.

2. Parents should consult the prevailing Department of Education and Skills Procedures for further information about the time periods allowed for reviews or appeals and the exact procedure applicable.

2. Review of decisions by the Board of Management

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 of the Principal to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

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.

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.

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

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

3. Right of Appeal

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.

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.

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.
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)
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)
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.
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.

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

1. While it is envisaged that, once admitted, most students will remain in St. Dymphna's Special School until they complete their education at 18 years of age, a child's ongoing participation at St. Dymphna's Special School is contingent upon the child's continued adherence to the Code of Behaviour.
2. Additionally, some children's needs may change overtime and exceed what the school can cater for.
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 presence of a moderate, severe or profound learning disability,

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.

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 to as per paragraph 19.6 below.
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.
6. The Board of Management will also ask the Principal for a detailed report setting out her/his recommendations.

7. 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.

8. The Board may decide to

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

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.

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.

Reviewed: **November 2022**
Ratified by the Board of Management: **20th December 2022**

Chairperson: _____

Appendix A
Application Form – St. Dymphna’s Special School

Internal Use Only:

School Stamp with Date of receipt of Application:

Forename:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	
Male: ____ Female: ____	Proposed Year of Entry:

Name of current school or preschool:
Present Class (if in school):
Dates attended:
Previous school(s) or preschool attended:
Other Schools applied to:

Parent Name (1):	Phone Number:	Parent 1’s Address:
Parent Name (2):	Phone Number:	Parent 2’s Address:
Guardian’s Name:	Phone Number:	Guardian’s Address:

Please set out the level of the child’s learning difficulty and/or their primary and (secondary) diagnoses:

--

Please detail any medical condition (including any prescribed medications), allergies or other relevant information:

Please detail how your child communicates (Gesture, Lámh, PECS, speech):

Please detail any sensory issues your child may have (reaction to noise/smell/touch):

DOCUMENTATION

Please ensure that all of the following is supplied with the application as otherwise it will not be processed:

A photocopy of birth certificate

Two proofs of residence within Catchment Area from

- a) ESB bill
- b) Gas bill
- c) Landline Telephone bill
- d) Household bill

A detailed report from a psychologist, psychiatrist, or a member of a Multi-Disciplinary team setting out the child's primary and secondary diagnoses and confirming that the child functions in the mild cognitive and mild adaptive ranges. (report must be dated no more than 2 years prior to date of application)

A school/pre-school report from the last 12 months

Support Plan/Individual Education Plan (if available)

Any other relevant reports – speech & language therapy/ occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychiatric and medical reports.

I understand that:

- the receipt of an application form does not guarantee that the child will be offered a place
- it is my responsibility to inform the school of any change of contact details or other relevant circumstances
- if I have not replied to a confirmed offer of a place for my child within 10 days of that offer being made, I will have forfeited my child's place on the admission list
- that a failure to provide all relevant medical and behavioural reports (as defined in Section 5 of the Admissions and Participation policy) from the last

3 years may invalidate this application and may result in the loss of my child's place in the school prior to or after admission.

Please tick each box (if the boxes are not ticked, this application will be returned as incomplete and will not be accepted):

<p>I have read the Admissions and Participation Policy and I confirm that I accept the terms of the application and admission process. I understand that these terms will continue in force through the duration of my child's admission in the school.</p>	<p>Please tick</p>
<p>I confirm that either (please place a tick beside which scenario applies) a) St. Dymphna's is the closest special school catering for children with Mild GLD to my child's primary residence and so my child will be able to apply for Department of Education transport, or b) St. Dymphna's is not the closest special school catering for children with Mild GLD to my child's primary residence. I will be responsible for transporting my child to school each day.</p>	
<p>Parent/Guardian Signature :</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	

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