

# Admission Policy

## Little Angels Special School

Roll Number: 19724A

School Patron: Little Angels Association

### 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 in December 2022. 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 Little Angels Special School admission process are set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Annual Admission Notice for the school year concerned.

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

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

Little Angels School is a multi-denominational school which caters for pupils with general moderate learning disability, severe/profound learning disability and pupils with autism under the patronage of Little Angels Association.

Ethos in the context of Little Angels Special School means the ethos and characteristic spirit, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; *and*
- the highest professional standards in learning and teaching; *and*
- care for each other and our pupils to feel secure in the knowledge that protection and support is always part of their lives at Little Angels School.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Little Angels Special School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

### **Mission Statement**

At Little Angels Special School we help and encourage each of our unique pupils to be *“the best that they can be”*.

In this endeavour, we strive to create an exciting and uplifting positive environment and in coming to school each day, our cherished pupils know that they are entering the kind, caring, happy environment that is *The Little Angels School*.

### **Our School Motto is: Education for Living**

### **Aims and Objectives**

- Provide a relevant, age appropriate education across the spectrum of abilities for all our pupils;
- Create a happy and contented environment for learning to take place;
- Promote the inclusion of our pupils into the wider community by actively advocating for their rights and entitlements;
- Encourage, support and advise all our parents as appropriate;
- Create a school atmosphere that supports all of the above and enables everyone, pupils, parents and staff to feel valued and supported at all times;
- Promote the Little Angels Special School ethos;
- Promote gender equality among pupils and staff;
- Promote the professional and personal development of staff both individually and collectively through access to relevant continuous professional development;
- Endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage them in the idea of being responsible; *and*
- Encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Little Angels Special School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

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

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

Little Angels Special School 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.

Little Angels Special School 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.

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

Little Angels Special School is a school which has established two Early Intervention Classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education, 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.

#### **4. Categories of Special Needs catered for in the school**

Little Angels Special School with the approval of the Minister for Education, provides an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of moderate, severe or profound learning disability and students with a diagnosis of autism between the ages of 4 and 18 years.

Little Angels Special School with the approval of the Minister for Education, has established two Early Intervention Classes to provide an education exclusively for students with autism between the ages of 3 and 6 years.

#### **5. Admission of Students**

##### **Application Procedure for the school's intake group**

- a) An applicant must have reached his/her fourth birthday on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year in which the application is made, must have a diagnosis of moderate, severe or profound learning disability or autism and a recommendation for special school placement
- b) Fully completed application form duly signed by parent(s)/legal guardian(s)
- c) Original birth certificate of the applicant
- d) Proof of address in the form of a utility bill and/or bank statement with an **Eircode** in the name of one/both parents/legal guardians which must be dated no later than **three months** prior to the closing date for receipt of applications.
- e) recent psychological assessment report from within the last 24 months which must contain a detailed recommendation from the Psychologist for the child to attend a special school as set out above and in Section 4 of this policy
- f) any professional reports from within the last 24 months including: -
  - a. Multi-Disciplinary Team Reports
  - b. Speech & Language Assessment
  - c. Occupational Therapy Report
  - d. Social Work Report
  - e. Medical Report
  - f. Psychiatric Assessment
- g) reports from the child's present school/pre-school (from within the last 24 months) with the details of the learning and social development of the child and any other issues of relevance

## **Application Procedure for the Early Intervention Autism Class**

- a) An applicant must have reached his/her third birthday on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year in which the application is made and must have diagnosis of autism which meets the DSM-IV, DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria
- b) Fully completed application form duly signed by parent(s)/legal guardian(s)
- c) Original birth certificate of the applicant
- d) Proof of address in the form of a utility bill and/or bank statement with an Eircode in the name of one/both parents/legal guardians which must be dated no later than **three months** prior to the closing date for receipt of applications.

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

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

Little Angels Special School provides an education exclusively for students with moderate, severe/profound learning difficulties and autism 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.

The Early Intervention Autism Class attached to Little Angels Special School provides an education for students who meet the criteria for inclusion in an autism early intervention class, i.e. a diagnosis of autism which meets the DSM-IV, DSM-V or ICD 10 criteria. A maximum of six students will apply to Early Intervention Class.

### **6. Oversubscription**

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

#### ***Selection Criteria – school's intake group***

1. Children currently enrolled in Early Intervention Autism class and who are four years on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year and have a recommendation for a special school placement.
2. Children with a diagnosis of moderate, severe/profound learning difficulties and/or autism and who are four years on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year and who

have a sibling(s) and/or stepsibling(s) currently enrolled in the school and have a recommendation for a special school placement.

3. Children with a diagnosis of moderate, severe/profound learning difficulties and/or autism who are four years on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year and who qualify as a resident for the purpose of this Admission Policy within the catchment area of Little Angels Special School and have a recommendation for a special school placement.
4. Children with a diagnosis of moderate, severe/profound learning difficulties and/or autism who are four years on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year and not included categories 1-3 and have a recommendation for a special school placement.

The Board of Management will apply the four selection criteria in the order of priority in which they are listed. In the event of a tie for the final place, the board will then determine the access to the final place by choosing the eldest of the tied applicants. In the event of more than one tied applicant having the same date of birth, the board will draw lots between these tied applicants for the last place. Any remaining applicant will be kept on a waiting list for the school year in which admission is being sought.

#### ***Selection Criteria – Early Intervention Autism Class***

1. Children with a diagnosis of autism and who are three years on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year and who have a sibling(s) and/or stepsibling(s) currently enrolled in the school.
2. Children with a diagnosis of autism who are three years on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year and who qualify as a resident for the purpose of this Admission Policy within the catchment area of Little Angels Special School.
3. Children with a diagnosis of autism who are three years on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year and who qualify as a resident for the purpose of this Admission Policy within the catchment area of Letterkenny.
4. Children with a diagnosis of autism who are three years on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the relevant school year and not included categories 1-3 and have a recommendation an early intervention autism class placement.
5. The Board of Management will apply the four selection criteria in the order of priority in which they are listed. In the event of a tie for the final place, the board will then determine the access to the final place by choosing the eldest of the tied applicants. In the event of more than one tied applicant having the same date of birth, the board will draw lots between these tied applicants for the last place. Any remaining applicant will be kept on a waiting list for the school year in which admission is being sought.

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

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

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, 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 in relation to admission to a special school 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, 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, in the case of siblings of a student attending or having attended the school;
- (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.

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Little Angels Special School 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

(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 Little Angels Special 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 Little Angels Special School, applicants must indicate—

- (i) whether or not they 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 they 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 Little Angels Special School where—

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

## **12. Sharing of data with other schools**

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

Section 66(6) allows a 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;
- (v) 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 Little Angels Special School 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 Little Angels Special School 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 (Admission to Schools) 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 **who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows.**

Pupils will be admitted to classes other than the school's intake group subject to a place being available.

Applications will be made for admission to Little Angels Special School by submitting a fully completed signed and dated Application Form with all the requested documentation as outlined in Section 5.

An offer of a place or a decision to refuse admission will be notified **within 21 days** of receipt of the application.

Acceptance of the offer must be made in writing **within 14 days** from the date of the letter of offer. Failure to do so may result in the place being forfeited and reallocated.

Applicants in respect of whom a fully completed application with all relevant documentation has been submitted, who are not successful in securing a place will be placed on a waiting list. This place on the waiting list expires at the end of the academic year of the relevant year.

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.**

- Applications received after the commencement of the school year will be placed at the end of the existing waiting list strictly in order of the date of receipt of application.
- Where a vacancy exists or becomes available in an age appropriate class, the next suitable applicant on the waiting list *for that class* will be offered the place.
- The waiting list expires at the end of academic year of the relevant year.

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

The Board of Management of Little Angels 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 enrolment 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 have 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) 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 may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education.

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

**Note:** In the absence of any procedures under S.29(b) of the Education Act 1998 where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review within three weeks of the date of the receipt of the refusal** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Similarly, In the absence of any procedures under S.29(b) 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 within three weeks of the date of the receipt of the refusal** 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, and in the absence of any procedures under S.29(b) of the Education Act 1998 the applicant **must request a review within three weeks of the date of the receipt** 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, and in the absence of any procedures under S.29(b) of the Education Act 1998 the applicant **may request a review within three weeks of the date of the receipt** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

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

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education. [www.gov.ie/education](http://www.gov.ie/education)

**Signed:**



**Single Manager**

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024