

September 2015

Enrolment Policy

Introductory Statement

The following policy was formulated following guidelines agreed between the CPSMA, Church of Ireland Board of Education and the INTO as provided for by the Education Act (1998) and involved the Board of Management, Principal and Staff of Clarecastle National School, Co. Clare. The Policy was reviewed in September 2015.

Clarecastle National School operates under the Rules for National Schools, The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), enacted sections of The Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004), all relevant equality legislation and Department of Education and Skills Circulars.

Aims:

The Board of Management is setting out its policy of enrolment in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998. The Board of Management insists that by doing so parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters and that furthermore the chairperson Mr. Liam Barry and the principal teacher Mr. Martin Moloney will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

General Information:

Clarecastle National School
Clarecastle
Co. Clare

Roll Number 17026M

Telephone: 065- 6828274
Fax: 065-6828287
E-mail clarecastlens.ias@eircom.net

Denominational Character:

Clarecastle N. S. has a Catholic Ethos and operates under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe.

Staffing:

There are presently 20 teachers including the principal.

We are a mixed school from junior infants to sixth class.
School hours are from 9.00am to 1.45pm for Junior and Senior Infants and from 9.00am to 2.45pm for all other classes.

There are two breaks 10.55am - 11.10am and 12.45pm – 1.15pm.

Clarecastle National School follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education & Skills which may be amended from time to time by the Department, in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.

Clarecastle National School depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills and the school operates within the regulations laid down by the department. All school policy has to have regard to the resources and funding made available by the Department of Education & Skills.

Within the context and parameters of Department of Education & Skills regulations and programmes, the rights of our patrons as set out in the Education Act (1998) and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of;

- inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need;
- respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and way of life in society.
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment.

The Procedure:

Applications:

The Board of Management of Clarecastle National School requests parents seeking to enrol their child(ren) into the school, to return a completed enrolment application form. A specific enrolment application form is available from the school office (Appendix 1).

A completed enrolment application form should be returned to the school office.

Completion of an enrolment application form, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.

Enrolment details will be communicated to the school community through the parish newsletter outlining the enrolment procedures each year. Under normal circumstances, communication through the parish newsletter will take place at the end of January each year.

Decisions in relation to enrolment will be communicated to applicants, in writing, during the month of March. Parents who are offered a place in Clarecastle National School will then be requested to complete and Enrolment Registration Form and return the letter of offer (Appendix 2) together with the documentation detailed below.

- **Completed Enrolment Registration Form**
- **A copy of prospective pupils' birth certificate.**
- **A copy of the pupils' baptismal certificate (if applicable).**
- **Proof of address in the form of a recent utility bill (not older than 6 months).**

In the event of being unable to supply a recent utility bill because of living in rented accommodation, an applicant must supply a written declaration from their landlord/County Council that they are the legal tenant at the address supplied on the Enrolment Application Form and Enrolment Registration Form.

The Board of Management of Clarecastle National School reserves the right to rescind an offer of enrolment where an applicant has:

- **Failed to provide the required documentation.**
- **Provided inaccurate information.**

Children enrolled in our school are required to co-operate with and support Clarecastle National Schools Code of Behaviour as well as other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. By enrolling a child(ren) in our school parents/guardians accept

responsibility for ensuring that their child(ren) co-operate and adhere to said policies in an age-appropriate way. In accordance with the Department of Education's rules for National Schools, these policies may be added to and revised from time to time.

Decision Making:

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management of Clarecastle National School in accordance with school policy.

Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to our school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, refugee status, religious/political beliefs/values, family or social circumstances.

The Board of Management shall as a general principle in so far as possible, enrol children on application provided there is a space available. While recognising the right of parents to enrol their children in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of Clarecastle National School is also responsible to respect the rights of the existing school community and 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. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind

- Relevant Department of Education and Skills guidelines and directives
- Size of available space in the classrooms
- Educational needs of a particular child
- Multi-grade classes
- Presence of children with special educational needs
- Behavioural needs

The Board of Management is bound by the Department of Education and Skills rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of four years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of six years.

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class, exceeding the number of places available proceeding or during the school year, the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment.

- a. Brothers and sisters (including step-siblings, resident at same address) of children already enrolled – priority to eldest.
- b. Children living within the parish– priority to eldest
- c. Children of current school staff – priority to eldest
- d. Children whose home address is closest to the school (as measured by a straight line in OS map) if the child is normally resident outside the parish/agreed catchment area.

Admission date:

The Board of Management will admit junior infants to school from the first day the school re-opens after the summer holidays up to September 30. Other pupils are enrolled during the school year (if newly resident in the area and subject to school enrolment policy).

If for any given reason parents wish to withdraw their child's enrolment form, they should notify the school as soon as possible before the new school term commences.

Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the rules governing National Schools, as well as the school enrolment policy, available space and in some cases the approval of the Department of Education and Skills.

New junior infants are invited to spend one informal period in school at the end of June to familiarise themselves with their environment.

Clarecastle National School has policy of randomly allocating children to junior infant classes. This will be carried out under Board of Management supervision, allocating equal numbers of boys and girls to each class. Exceptions will be made in the event of:

- Children with special needs
- Siblings where the number enrolling exceeds one, i.e. twins.

Parental preferences will be considered in the above situations.

The class teachers in consultation with the principal will review the classes at the end of the school year, and will make any changes deemed necessary.

Enrolment of children with special needs:

In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs, the Board of Management requests a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available to request that the child be assessed immediately.

The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report, the board shall assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. Where the board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report.

These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, resource teacher for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment of furniture, transport services or other.

The school principal and /or a member of the resource team meet with the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. If necessary, a full-case conference involving all parties will be held, which may include parents, principal, class teacher, resource teacher for special needs or psychologist as appropriate

It may be necessary for the Board of Management to decide to defer enrolment of a particular child, pending:

- the receipt of an assessment report; and/or
- the provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education and Skills to meet the needs specified in the Psychological and/or medical report.

Notwithstanding the availability of such resources, parents of children who are unsatisfied with the level of educational provision in our school, are advised to consider a special school which is designed and resourced to specifically cater for the needs of children with special educational needs.

Pupils Transferring:

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to school policy, available space and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Skills. This is a requirement of the Board of Management that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress be communicated between schools. (Section 28, Education Welfare Act 2000).

Appeals:

Where the Board of Management of Clarecastle National School refuses to enrol a student into the school the parent of student can make an appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, who in turn will bring the appeal to the next Board of Management meeting, the appeal will be heard and a decision made. The Secretary of the Board of Management will notify the parents/guardians of the student, of the decision.

Where the Board of Management refuses to enrol a student following conclusion of an appeal at school level, the parents/guardians have a statutory entitlement under Section 29 of the Education Act, to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department and Skills.

Details of appealing decisions of enrolments under section 20 of the Education Act are available from the Department of Education and Skills website, www.education.ie and will be forwarded in writing to the parents/guardians who have failed to secure admission.

Refusal to Enrol/ Rescinding of Offer of Enrolment

The Board of Management of Clarecastle National School reserves the right to refuse enrolment or to rescind an offer of enrolment to any child, in certain cases.

Such cases can arise where:

- The child has special educational needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
- Where in the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.
- Where applicants have failed to provide the required documentation.
- Where applicants have provided inaccurate information.

Signed: _____
Mr. Liam Barry
Chairperson BOM

Date: 17th September 2015