



Enrolment and Admissions Policy (2015)

Introductory statement

The Board of Management (BoM) of Raheen Wood Steiner National School (RWSNS) sets out its Enrolment and Admissions Policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998. This Policy has been devised by the BoM in consultation with the College of Teachers and the parent body of the school. The Chairperson of the BoM or the Principal Teacher will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this policy.

General School Information

Name: Raheen Wood Steiner National School
Role Number: 20312H
Tel No: 061 921494
Email: info@raheenwood.org
Website: www.raheenwood.org

RWSNS is a co-educational, multid denominational, child centred school, founded on the principals of Steiner-Waldorf education, under the Patronage of Lifeways Ireland.

The school operates within the regulations laid down, by the Department, and the school Policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

School starts at 8:50am and the school day ends at 1:30pm (Junior and Senior Infants) and 2:40pm (1st-6th class).

Ethos

Raheen Wood Steiner National School is founded on the principals of Steiner-Waldorf education and the conviction that a true education must engage and nourish the whole child: body, mind and spirit. It is an education that seeks to awaken capacities. We work to develop an education that is a living, loving process. This education recognises that as a child changes and grows, so does his or her readiness and ability to take up certain tasks in their lives. This education will awaken in them the confidence and truth of their connection to and place in the wider community and world.

Raheen Wood Steiner National School is committed to creating an inclusive school that fosters acceptance and respect for diversity of culture, practices, customs, and beliefs, intellectual and physical abilities.

Rationale

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school

- To make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with the Ethos of the school and legislative requirements
- To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available to it and
- To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school

Legal Framework

Section 9 (j) of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that “A recognized school shallSubject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school”.

Section 15 (2) (d) states the Board of Management shall “publish The policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents’ choice are respected”.

Section 27 (1) states that “A board shall establish and maintain procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school” and (2) that “the procedures established and maintained under subsection (1) shall facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the School having regard to the age and experience of the students, in association with their parents and teachers”.

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 [Section 19 (1)] requires that a Board of Management shall not refuse to admit a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the school’s Admission Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the Board of Management, shall as soon as possible (but no later than 21 days) after receiving such information “make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof”

The Equal Status Act, 2000 [Sections 5 & 7 (2)] prohibits discrimination on the grounds of “gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling Community” regarding admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction. There are limited exceptions regarding single-sex schools and schools promoting particular religious values [Section 7 (3)].

Goals

The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

- To inform parents about the school, its programmes, activities, and procedures
- To enable applications for admission to the school to be handled in an open, transparent manner
- To put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered
- To ensure that these criteria are informed by our Ethos and current legislation
- To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application

Context, Resources, School Organisation & Curriculum

The school supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school. The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parent's choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of any applicant or student. The school will make every effort to secure those resources – but where the resources cannot be secured the school may refuse admission.

The limits to class size which currently apply are as follows:

| | |
|--|----|
| Kindergarten (Combined Junior and Senior Infants): | 26 |
| 1st & 2nd Class combined: | 26 |
| 3rd & 4th Class combined: | 28 |
| 5th & 6th Class combined: | 28 |

The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil – teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department from time to time.

The capacity of the school to implement its desired curriculum, its broad range of educational programmes, its breadth of extra-curricular activities, its school plan and policies are dependent on the resources it receives. Consequently, in determining its activities and programme for any school year the school must have due regard to the teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

Roles and responsibilities in developing and implementing this policy:

Roles of Board of Management

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementations and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- To decide on appeals by parents or students with respect to any decision(s) made by the Principal/Board..
- To prepare (and submit to the Education Welfare Board) a statement of Strategies regarding Attendance. The Statement of Strategy will have regard to guidelines issued by the Education Welfare Board and will set out the measures the BoM proposes to adopt
 - a) For the purposes of fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending the school and
 - b) Encouraging regular attendance at the school on the part of all students

Role of the Principal

- To formulate draft policy in consultation with the teaching staff, students, parents, Board and Trustees
- To monitor its implementation and to ensure that it is reviewed by the review date
- To implement the policy and to support other teaching staff in their implementation of the policy
- To apply for and acquire such resources as are available in accordance with government policies
- To ensure, within the constraints of available resources, that alternative programmes are devised where necessary and practicable to meet the needs of students
- To appraise the policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate
- To ensure a register of all students attending the school is established and maintained
- To ensure that a record of attendance or non-attendance is maintained for each student registered at this school and, in the case of non-attendance, the reason for same
- Prior to registering a child, to provide the parents of an applicant with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and ensure that the parent confirm in writing their acceptance of the Code of an assurance that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code by the child
- To provide, on request, to any parent of a child registered in the school with a copy of the Code of Behaviour
- Where a child is refused admission, to advise the parents of their right of appeal to the BoM and the Department of Education setting out Title and Address of each and advising of time limits

Role of Teaching staff

- To co-operate with the implementation of this policy
- To take the needs of all students into account in the way in which they select textbooks, plan and teach their lessons and conduct assessments
- To bring concerns about Special Needs curricular matters and information to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Needs Teacher
- To keep parents informed through the regular Parent / Teacher Meetings and School Reports and by meeting parents from time to time as required.
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate

Role of Students

- To co-operate fully with the school in the implementations of the policy
- To offer suggestions for improving the service to students with special needs

Role of Parents

- To support the policy and to co-operate fully with the school in its implementation
- To bring to the attention of the school authorities any concern they may have in relation to the school's provision for the educational needs of their child

- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implantation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate

Policy Considerations

The BoM of RWSNS reserves the right of admission if such admissions contravene Departmental guidelines on class size, etc.

The school will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, special education needs, disability, traveller status, refugee status, political or religious beliefs, family or social circumstances, provided the necessary supports are in place in the school.

The school will maintain a list of refused applicants for each class, their place on that list having been determined under the criteria outlined.

The BoM respects parental choice in relation to enrolment, provided the enrolment criteria are fulfilled.

The BoM of RWSNS, in its Policy of Admissions/Enrolment, respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. Consequently, the BoM reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each class, bearing in mind:

- Health & Safety Concerns regarding Staff and Children
- Available classroom space
- Multi-grade classes
- Educational needs of the children
- Presence of children with special needs
- Department of Education & Skills class size directives
- Appropriate Supports and Resources are available
- Time of school year

Procedures – Application, Enrolment Criteria & Decision / Appeals

- Failure to fully complete forms may result in refusal to admit a student.
- Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage
- In applying the criteria for enrolment, the school will take into account Gender Balance Male / Female and limitations in the size of classes

Admission to the school is, of course, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources, and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission. Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources-where the resources cannot be secured, the school reserves the unfettered right to refuse admission. It is the responsibility of parents / guardians of any child to inform the school of any such needs on the enrolment application form for the child's own welfare. In this context the school authorities will have equal regard for the welfare of all the students and their right to an education in an atmosphere that is not detrimental to their physical, emotional, moral, social or intellectual development. Failure to fully complete the application form, failure to supply any relevant information requested by the school or failure to make reasonable arrangements to meet with the school authorities to discuss the application may result in a child being refused admission to the school.

Application for immediate admission in the current school year

- i) Application forms are available from the School Secretary.
- ii) Failure to fully complete forms may result in refusal to admit the applicant.
- iii) The behaviour record of a student in their previous school shall be considered.
- iv) The attendance record of the student in their previous school shall be considered.
- v) According to school policy, students will be enrolled at the beginning of each school year. Exceptional enrolment of a student into a current class during the spring and summer term is at the discretion of the Principal.

Enrolment Procedure

The registration process is initiated on receipt by the school of a completed application form. This form must be signed and dated by one or both parents or guardians. The form is date stamped on receipt by the school. *Telephone calls or personal school visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.*

Date of application, child's date of birth, address and telephone contact number are recorded in the School Record of Applications, and the attached acknowledgement (Appendix.1) together with a copy of this policy is sent to the applicant. The acknowledgement of an application merely confirms that it will be assessed under the criteria outlined, and does not confer any further status on that application.

Entry in the School Record of Applications means that an application will be considered in March of the relevant enrolment year, and will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria outlined in this policy.

Following this evaluation, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board, listing proposed enrolments for the forthcoming year. Once an enrolment list is approved by the Board, all applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome, and if refused admission will be notified of their entitlement to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Please note:

Applications for admission to Junior Infant Class must be made at the very latest by the end of March of the year in which it is expected that the child will start school. The Board of Management strongly recommends that applicant children are at least four years of age on or before April 30 of the school commencement year.

Enrolment Criteria to Junior Infants

If the number of children on the Waiting List exceeds the number of places available, the following prioritising criteria are used:

| Priority | Criterion |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Priority is given to brothers and sisters of children already in the school or who have attended the school in the past. |
| 2 | Children of current teaching staff. |
| 3 | Children who are aged 4.5 years or over on 1 st September of year of admission. |
| 4 | Children resident in Ireland who have previous experience of Steiner-Waldorf education. |
| 5 | Children whose primary residence is within a 10 mile distance by road of the school. If class is oversubscribed within the application of this particular criterion, then those whose primary residence is furthest from the school will be eliminated first. |
| 6 | Children of parents with a permanent residence in Ireland. If class is oversubscribed within the application of this particular criterion, then those whose primary residence is furthest from the school will be eliminated first. |
| 7 | If space is still available, class numbers are completed from the Waiting Lists, which is compiled and ordered according to the date of the original application. The criteria are listed in order of priority when spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and a space is still available. Then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritization proceeds until all places have been allocated. |

Note: If the class is over subscribed on the basis of any of the above criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all the places are allocated.

Criteria for Enrolment to Senior Infants to Class 6

The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for available places in the Senior Infants to 6 classes.

| Priority | Criterion |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Priority is given to brothers and sisters of children already in the school or who have attended the school in the past. |
| 2 | Children of current teaching staff. |
| 3 | Children resident in Ireland who have previous experience of Steiner-Waldorf education. |
| 4 | Children whose primary residence is within a 10 mile distance by road of the school. If class is oversubscribed within the application of this particular criterion, then those whose primary residence is furthest from the school will be eliminated first. |
| 5 | Children of parents with a permanent residence in Ireland. If class is oversubscribed within the application of this particular criterion, then those whose primary residence is furthest from the school will be eliminated first. |
| 6 | If space is still available, class numbers are completed from the Waiting Lists, which is compiled and ordered according to the date of the original application. The criteria are listed in order of priority when spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and a space is still available. Then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritization proceeds until all places have been allocated. |

Note: *If the class is over subscribed on the basis of any of the above criteria, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all the places are allocated.*

Admission Assessment Date

Applications made before the Easter holidays for enrolment in the next school year (ie. following September) will be assessed in the first week of the Summer Term, and applicants will then be advised of the result of their application.

Applications made after the Easter holidays will be assessed as soon as possible, and available places will be offered as soon as an application is assessed.

Ethos

The school believes that close and regular home and school cooperation and interaction is essential. All parents and children enrolled in the school are expected to support the Ethos of the school and comply with and support all school policies, such as the school's Code of Behaviour, as well as the school's designated policies on Curriculum, Organisation and Management.

Enrolment of children with special needs

Parents of children with special needs are required to supply all relevant documentation, i.e. medical and or psychological reports. Where no report is available the school will request an assessment be made immediately, 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 college of teachers and Board will assess how the school can meet the needs of the child.

Pupils Transferring

Pupils wishing to transfer from another school are enrolled subject to:

1. The rules governing national schools. It is a requirement of Boards of Management that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress be communicated between schools.
2. The school enrolment policy.
3. The school being satisfied with the reasons for transfer.
4. The school regarding the move to be in the best interest of the pupil.
5. Available space.

All children enrolled are expected to comply with and support the school's Code of Behaviour, as well as all other school policies.

Evaluation

The BoM will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the Policy and review and amend the Policy as required, with particular emphasis placed upon

- Effective management placed on application process
- Clarity and transparency relating to the process
- Applicants informed in good time re the status of their application, particularly in the case of refusal to enrol
- Positive Parental feedback

Monitoring Procedures

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the BoM at the appropriate time. It will also be referred by the Principal for consideration by the full staff at the same time. The Principal will report to the Board regarding the process of enrolment in December each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete. Where the Principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated to him by the Board in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

Review Procedure

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience and will be formally reviewed by the full staff and BoM every five years. Any staff member, board member, parent guardian or student who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Next formal review of this policy will occur before of during the school year of **2019/20**.

Signed

_____ **Chairperson Board of Management on** _____

_____ **Principal on** _____