

St Oliver Plunkett Special School

Admissions / Enrolment Policy 2026/2027

School Information

St Oliver Plunkett Special School

Admissions Policy

School Information

School: St Oliver Plunkett Special School

Address: Alma Place, Carrickbrennan Road, Monkstown, Co. Dublin

Telephone: 01 280 8824

Roll Number: 19499T

Patron: Archbishop of Dublin

Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, the Equal Status Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004, and all relevant circulars and guidance issued by the Department of Education and Youth relating to admissions. In drafting this policy, the Board of Management of St Oliver Plunkett Special School consulted with:

- school staff;
- the school Patron; and
- parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the Patron and is published on the school's website. A hard copy will be made available, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for the admissions 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 admissions process.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Annual Admission Notice for the relevant school year.

The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all admissions are conducted in a fair, transparent and equitable manner, in accordance with the school's legal obligations and the specialist role of Reading Schools within the Irish education system.

1. Characteristic Spirit, Mission and General Objectives of the School

Characteristic Spirit

St Oliver Plunkett Special School is a Catholic co-educational Reading School under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. The school provides a specialist two-year placement for pupils with severe dyslexia (Specific Learning Difficulty – Dyslexia) who meet the agreed enrolment criteria for Reading Schools.

As a Catholic school, we seek to promote the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical development of every child within a caring, respectful and inclusive learning environment. While the school has a Catholic ethos, children of all faiths and of none are welcomed and respected in accordance with the Equal Status Act 2000.

Reading Schools provide a specialist educational setting for children whose severe dyslexia has had a significant impact on their ability to access the curriculum despite appropriate interventions in their mainstream school. Placement provides an intensive, evidence-informed literacy programme designed to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to return successfully to mainstream education.

In accordance with Section 15(2)(b) of the Education Act 1998, the Board of Management shall uphold, and be accountable to the Patron for upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school.

Mission Statement

St Oliver Plunkett Special School is dedicated to providing a caring, inclusive and supportive learning environment in which every child is respected, valued and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

Our mission is to provide a high-quality, evidence-informed literacy programme for pupils with severe dyslexia, enabling them to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to return successfully to mainstream education. We recognise that every child is unique and strive to meet their individual academic, social, emotional and pastoral needs throughout their time in our school.

Working in partnership with parents, mainstream schools and relevant professionals, we are committed to fostering confidence, resilience, independence and a lifelong love of learning. Guided by our Catholic ethos, we seek to nurture the intellectual, emotional, social, moral, spiritual and physical development of every pupil, preparing them to participate fully in school and in life.

General Objectives

In fulfilling our mission, we seek to:

- provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive school community where every child feels respected, valued and supported;
- deliver an intensive, evidence-informed literacy programme that enables pupils to make significant progress in reading, spelling, writing, oral language and comprehension;
- recognise and respond to the individual strengths, needs and potential of every pupil through high-quality teaching and targeted intervention;
- promote confidence, resilience, independence and self-advocacy, enabling pupils to become successful learners;
- foster positive relationships based on kindness, respect, inclusion and mutual responsibility;
- work collaboratively with parents, mainstream schools, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and other relevant professionals to support each pupil's educational journey;

- prepare pupils for a successful return to mainstream education following their specialist placement; and
- uphold the Catholic ethos and characteristic spirit of the school in all aspects of school life.

2. Admission Statement

St Oliver Plunkett Special School supports the principles of:

- inclusiveness;
- equality of access to, and participation in, school life; and
- parental choice in relation to enrolment.

The school will not discriminate in its admission of a student on any of the following grounds:

- gender;
- civil status;
- family status;
- sexual orientation;
- religion;
- disability;
- race;
- membership of the Traveller community; or
- the fact that the student has special educational needs.

As provided for under Section 61(3) of the Education Act 1998, the terms *civil status ground*, *disability ground*, *discriminate*, *family status ground*, *gender ground*, *ground of race*, *religion ground*, *sexual orientation ground* and *Traveller community ground* shall be construed in accordance with Section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

St Oliver Plunkett Special School is a Catholic school whose objective is to provide education in an environment that promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith, provided it is proven that such refusal is essential to maintain the characteristic spirit of the school.

With the approval of the Minister for Education and Youth, St Oliver Plunkett Special School provides education exclusively for pupils with Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia) who meet the agreed enrolment criteria for Reading Schools. Accordingly, the school may refuse admission to a student who does not have the category of special educational needs catered for by the school.

St Oliver Plunkett Special School will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in the performance of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education for children with special educational needs, including, where appropriate, the establishment and operation of special classes when requested to do so by the Council.

The school will comply with any direction served on the Patron or the Board of Management under the Education Act 1998 in relation to the admission of students or the provision of special education.

3. Categories of Special Educational Needs Catered for by the School

With the approval of the Minister for Education and Youth, St Oliver Plunkett Special School provides education exclusively for pupils with **Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia)** who meet the agreed enrolment criteria for Reading Schools.

Pupils eligible for placement in a Reading School will have received appropriate interventions in their mainstream school and require a specialist educational setting to address the severity of their literacy needs. Placement in a Reading School is recommended where the intensity of support required cannot reasonably be provided through the supports ordinarily available in a mainstream school.

The school provides a specialist, intensive literacy programme for pupils whose dyslexia is the primary educational need affecting their ability to access and participate fully in the curriculum. Placement in a Reading School provides an intensive educational intervention designed to enable pupils to make significant progress in literacy and develop the skills and confidence required to return successfully to mainstream education.

Reading Schools provide a temporary specialist placement for pupils whose severe dyslexia has had a significant impact on their educational progress despite appropriate evidence-informed intervention in their mainstream school. Admission is based on the nationally agreed enrolment criteria for Reading Schools and the recommendation of a psychologist that placement in a Reading School is the most appropriate educational intervention.

The school caters for pupils:

- who have completed Second Class or are at least eight years of age on **1 September** in the year of enrolment;
- who are normally enrolled from **Third Class to Sixth Class**; and
- who attend the school for a temporary placement before returning to their mainstream school.
-

The school operates with small class groups and a pupil-teacher ratio determined by the Department of Education and Youth for Reading Schools, enabling intensive, specialist literacy instruction tailored to the individual needs of each pupil.

The Board of Management has regard to the nationally agreed enrolment criteria for Reading Schools when considering all applications for admission.

There are common procedures for enrolment and application to each of the three Reading Schools in Dublin. These procedures have been agreed by the Reading Schools and are applied consistently when processing applications for admission. St Oliver Plunkett Special School follows these agreed procedures when considering all applications for admission. These enrolment criteria and procedures are in accordance with:

- the Education Act 1998; and
- the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Youth.

St Oliver Plunkett Special School operates within the resources provided by the Department of Education and Youth and in accordance with all relevant legislation, regulations, circulars and Department guidance governing the operation of special schools.

The school follows:

- the Primary School Curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education and Youth (with the exception of Irish); and
- a specialist, evidence-informed literacy programme designed to meet the needs of pupils with Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia).
-

The processing of applications for Reading Schools and the organisation of school transport are overseen by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

The Board of Management trusts that this policy will assist parents and guardians in understanding the admissions process. The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal will be pleased to clarify any aspect of this policy or the school's admissions procedures.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs Catered for in the School

St Oliver Plunkett Special School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, is a school catering for children with **Specific Reading Difficulties (Dyslexia)**.

Children attending the school have been assessed as having a **Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia)**.

Because of the needs of the children attending the school, special emphasis is placed on the teaching and development of:

- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling
- Oral language skills

The school caters for pupils from **Third Class to Sixth Class**.

Enrolment is normally for a period of **two years**.

Pupils must:

- be **eight years of age by 1 September** in the year of enrolment; or
- have completed **Second Class**.

The school has:

- **Seven classes**
- **A 9:1 pupil-teacher ratio.**

5. Admission of Students

St Oliver Plunkett Special School shall admit each student seeking admission except where:

- the school is oversubscribed (see **Section 6**);
- a parent/guardian, when required by the Principal in accordance with Section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the school's Code of Behaviour is acceptable and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with that Code by the student; or
- the student does not have a **Specific Reading Difficulty (Dyslexia)**.

How to Apply and the Enrolment Procedure

Application

An application consists of a copy of the child's most recent Educational Psychological Report which states that the psychologist recommends applying to the Reading Schools.

The report can be sent by:

- the parent; or
- the school (with the permission of the parents).

All contact details of the school and parents should be contained in this application.

Please note: Inaccurate or falsified information could result in the child not being offered a place.

Closing Date for Applications

The closing date for receipt of applications will be **5.00 pm on the day before the school closes for Christmas holidays**.

For example, applications for the school year **2021–2022** will close on **21 December 2020 at 5.00 pm**.

This will allow time:

- to process the applications; and
- to give parents adequate opportunity to find an alternative placement should the application be unsuccessful.

All applications received after that date will go forward for consideration for the following year.

Processing Applications

When applications are received they are:

- acknowledged by letter;
- placed in a file in the order in which they are received;
- date stamped; and
- issued with a cover sheet for each applicant.

Each application will be considered under the criteria and a list of eligible children will be drawn up.

A list will be prepared of eligible children up to and including those on the **5th Percentile for Word Reading**, and places will be offered in ascending order.

Successful applicants will be informed in the first half of the second term.

Liaison with the Current School

The Principal of the school that the child is currently enrolled in will be informed of the intention to offer a place.

A pro forma report is sent to the school Principal requesting a report on the child's progress at school.

Further information may be requested from:

- the psychologist;
- the school;
- parents/guardians; and
- other relevant agencies.

Parent Information Meeting

The parents of successful applicants are sent a detailed brochure about the school and an appointment time to visit.

They are not obliged to visit and places will not be withheld if parents do not attend these meetings. (*Appendix 2*)

Parents visit the school in a small group and meet with:

- the Principal;
- members of the Board of Management; and
- members of the Parents' Association.

Parents also fill out the relevant forms at this meeting.

The children do not attend this meeting. (*Appendix 3*)

Acceptance of a Place

Parents will be offered a period of **10 school days** to decide on accepting places in writing.
(Appendix 4)

Successful applicants are placed on the **Aladdin School Management System**.

Relevant information will be forwarded to the **POD (Primary Online Database)** on enrolment.

The meetings with parents take place during the **second term** after places have been offered.

Places cannot be deferred to the following year(s).

Enrolment for a Third Year

Addendum (May 2002)

In certain circumstances a third year may be offered where:

- reading scores on standardised assessment tests are significantly below expected levels of attainment;
- the child's rate of progress across all literacy areas is very low; and
- the child's scores at the end of Year Two, if he/she were to apply for initial placement, would meet the criteria for enrolment.

In addition to school-administered standardised tests, the Principal will test reading ability using the **Wechsler Objective Reading Dimension Test for Teachers (WORD)**.

The child's:

- teacher;
- parents; and
- Principal

have all been consulted and agree that a third year is necessary.

The Board of Management must have received, through the Principal, a written request from parents/guardians for their child to be considered for a third year.

Offers of a third year are entirely at the discretion of the Board of Management.

If a child, through continuing illness or other medical reasons, has missed a lot of school, a request for a third year may be considered.

The names of possible third year candidates are sent to the Principal by class teachers after Christmas, and parents are invited to consider whether they wish to make a formal application.

These children will then be tested by the Principal.

These children will be tested in January.

St Oliver Plunkett National School is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

In the event of oversubscription on any of the percentile ranks, the children will be prioritised by age, with the **older children being offered places first**.

Where there are **two or more students tied for a place** with matching selection criteria and percentile ranking, the children will be prioritised by age, with the **older child being offered a place first**.

Waiting List

A waiting list is created.

- The waiting list is numbered.
- Parents are kept informed of their child's position on the waiting list.
- Initially, this is communicated by telephone.
- As the situation becomes clearer, parents are informed in writing during the second half of **Term 2**.

Places only become available where a parent/guardian decides not to send a child to the school.

Important Information

Enrolment is strictly adhered to as detailed in the Enrolment Policy.

There are almost always more candidates than places.

Please note: The school does **not** operate on a **"first come, first served"** basis.

7. What Will Not Be Considered for Admission

In accordance with Section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider 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 student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including **naíonraí**;
- the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- 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 Admission Notice of the school for the school year concerned; and
- the school making offers based on existing waiting lists.

8. Decisions on Applications

As a general rule and in so far as practicable having regard to this Admissions Policy, children will be enrolled on application, provided that:

- the child meets the enrolment criteria for Reading Schools; and
- there is space available.

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Oliver Plunkett will be based on the following:

- the school's Admission Policy;
- the school's Annual Admission Notice (where applicable);
- the information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form, received during the period specified in the school's Annual Admission Notice for receiving applications.

(Please see Section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period.)

Selection criteria that are not included in the school's Admission Policy will not be used in the decision making on an application for a place in the 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.

(See Section 5 – Enrolment Procedures.)

If a student is not offered a place in the 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 and/or right of appeal of the school's decision.

(See Section 18 for further details.)

10. Acceptance of an Offer of a Place by an Applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Oliver Plunkett, you must indicate:

(i)

Whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools.

If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned.

(ii)

Whether or not you have applied for, and are awaiting confirmation of, an offer of admission from another school or schools.

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 St. Oliver Plunkett where:

- it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading;
- 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;
- 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;
- an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of '**Acceptance of an Offer**' as set out in **Section 10** above;
- the psychological report does not place the child within the average range of ability;
- as evidenced in the psychological assessment, the **SLD/Dyslexia** is not the primary difficulty of the child;

- the child's performance in basic literacy skills, as measured by a standardised test, is above the level accepted for enrolment;
- the child should be eight years old and not more than twelve years old on the first day of the school year.

Parents are informed that this decision of the Board of Management may be appealed under **Section 29 of the Education Act** within **45 days** of receipt of a refusal letter.

(See Section 18.)

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:

- an application for admission to the school has been received;
- an offer of admission to the school has been made; or
- an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- 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).

Provision of Key Information by Parents for Admission of Students

A Pupil Registration Form is provided to parents when children are being enrolled in the school.

This information includes:

- pupil's name and address;
- names and addresses of parents/guardians;
- contact telephone numbers and telephone numbers in case of emergency;
- details of any medical conditions;
- previous schools attended and reasons for transfer;
- all details relevant for the **POD (Primary Online Database)**; and

- any other relevant information (including information as may be prescribed under the **Education (Welfare) Act 2000** or the **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004**).

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 St. Oliver Plunkett 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 St. Oliver Plunkett 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 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:

- the 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 considered for placement in the following school year.

15. Declaration in Relation to the Non-Charging of Admission Fees

The Board of Management of St. Oliver Plunkett, or any persons acting on its behalf, will not charge fees for, or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of:

- an application for admission of a student to the school; or
- the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

16. 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, has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction.

These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students.

A written request for this arrangement should be made to the Principal of the school.

A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s)/guardian(s), or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

17. Reviews / Appeals

Review of Decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student may request the Board of Management to review a decision to refuse admission.

Such requests must be made in accordance with **Section 29C of the Education Act 1998**.

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

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

Note:

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

Right of Appeal

Appeals should first be made to the **Board of Management**. Following dissatisfaction with this decision, a further appeal can be made to:

Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit

The Department of Education
Friars Mill Road
Mullingar
Co. Westmeath

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 the 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.
- **Section 29(1)(c)(ii)** of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

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

(See "Review of Decisions by the Board of Management" above.)

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" above.)

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

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made, and the other requirements applicable to such appeals, are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under **Section 29B of the Education Act 1998**, which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

Ratification

This policy is ratified by the Board of Management and will be subject to periodic review.

Ratified on: _____

Principal: _____

Chairperson: _____