



**Admission Policy of Achonry National School.
School Address: Achonry, Tubbercurry, County Sligo.**

Roll number: 04487E

School Patron: Bishop Paul Dempsey.

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 Achonry National 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 the school year 2020-2021, 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 Achonry N.S. 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

Achonry N.S. is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Achonry.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Achonry N.S. 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

ETHOS AND MISSION STATEMENT OF ACHONRY NATIONAL SCHOOL

ETHOS

Here in Achonry N.S. we aim to develop the pupil in a Spiritual, moral and intellectual way. Spiritual development of the children consists in teaching them the Christian faith and inspiring in them a love for God and a love and respect for each other. Moral development runs parallel to the spiritual development of the child.

Religion: While the ethos of the school is essentially Catholic, the views of the minority religious and non-believers are accommodated and respected by teachers and pupils.

Work: A positive climate is used to motivate the pupil. Every effort is made to enhance the child's self-image and to foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere, conducive to learning.

Helping Others: Children are made aware of the needs of the under-privileged at home, and in the Developing World. They are encouraged to support local charities as well as the work of charities such as Trócaire and Bóthar.

Aims

1. To promote the self-esteem of all pupils by helping each child to make a contribution to the life of the school and to experience a sense of achievement and success.
2. To develop good staff/pupil and pupil/pupil relationships.
3. To develop good positive and productive school/family/community links.
4. To develop a stimulating and well-balanced Health Education curriculum for the whole school.
5. To utilise the services in the community for advice and support.
6. To ensure that all pupils acquire the basic skills of language and maths to cope successfully with everyday living.
7. To teach children the skills involved in coping successfully with human relationships.
8. To inform the children on such matters as hygiene, diet and exercise.
9. To value and enjoy leisure activities.

MISSION STATEMENT

Achonry N.S. is a Catholic, co-educational primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy, safe and supportive environment where the intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of the children is provided for.

- Achonry N.S. is a school with a Catholic ethos, which promotes an atmosphere where difference is respected and it welcomes children of all religions and none.
- Achonry N.S. does not discriminate on the grounds of gender, age, race, disability, marital status, family status, sexual orientation or against members of the Travelling Community when enrolling pupils or appointing staff.
- Achonry N.S. uses a positive climate to motivate its pupils. Every effort is made to enhance the self-image of all pupils and promote in them a respect for people, property and environment.
- Achonry N.S. encourages the involvement of parents through home / school contacts.

- Achonry N.S. strives to promote the professional and personal development of its teachers.
- Achonry N.S. promotes gender equality among its teachers and pupils.
- Achonry N.S. endorses the principles of inclusion of pupils with Special Needs as per Education of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2003.
- Déanann Achonry N.S., iarracht an Gaeilge a chothú mar teanga beo na scoile.

3. Admission Statement

Achonry N.S. 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, '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.

- Achonry NS 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.

- Achonry NS 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.

Achonry National School is not a Special School and does not have a Special Education Class.

Achonry N.S. is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

All pupils with special educational needs regardless of ability, skills or aptitude are welcome to enrol in Achonry N.S. Should parents wish to enrol a child with special needs the Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report(s). If the report(s) is not available it will request that the child be assessed as soon as possible. The purpose of the assessment is to assist the school in establishing the educational and care needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or additional needs. The provisions of the Educational Disabilities Bill 2004 will be complied with. When the Board of Management receives the report, they will then be in a position to assess how the school can meet the requirements specified in the report. The Board of Management will then endeavour to have all resources and supports in place before the child is admitted to the school. These resources may include access to, or the provision of, a combination of the following:

- Visiting Teachers for those with Impaired Vision / Hearing
- Special Education Teacher (SET)
- Special Needs Assistant
- Specialised equipment, furniture, structural adjustments and/ or enhancements
- Transport services

The Principal and the Class Teacher, will meet the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability of meeting those needs. If a further case conference is required, all parties concerned will be invited. These will include the Parents, Principal, Class Teacher, Learning Support/Resource Teacher, Special Class Teacher, Social Workers and Psychologist as appropriate. It may be

necessary for the Board to defer enrolling a particular child pending the outcome of the conference. If further resources are required, the Board will defer enrolment until the Department of Education and Skills has provided these resources. The school requires an assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility is primarily to all the pupils in our care. Therefore, if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the enrolment of the child, with a disability and/or special education needs, is having an ongoing detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the continued enrolment of the individual child.

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment to a pupil in exceptional circumstances, bearing in mind: -

- The educational needs of the existing pupils.
- The pupil has special needs such, that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills the school cannot meet the needs and/or provide the pupil with appropriate education.
- If the Board of Management are of the belief that the pupil poses an unacceptable risk, to other pupils, to the school staff or to school property.

5. Admission of Students

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

Achonry N. S. is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of a Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Achonry National School is not a Special School and does not have a Special Education 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:

- A. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of April and who have siblings (including step/foster-siblings, resident at same address) of children already enrolled, or, Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of April and who are siblings (including step / foster-siblings resident at the same address) of past pupils.
- B. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of April and who qualify as a resident of the Achonry/Mullinabreena Parish / Area .
Note: Two of following documents dated within three months of the date of application must be supplied as proof of address: Bank Statement, Utility bill, e.g. electricity, or water.
- C. Children who are four years of age on or before the first day of April and not included within the preceding categories and whose parent is a member of the staff of the school.
- D. Any child who is four years of age on or before the first day of April who applies for a place and who is not included in categories 1-3 is entitled to be enrolled if there are places available after the groups 1-3 have been allocated places.

Note: The Board of Management currently operates a maximum average of 26 pupils per mainstream class, based on the staffing circular of the Department of Education and Skills Circular 18/2020

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

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 retained on a waiting list for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Achonry National School is not a Special School and does not have a Special Education Class.

7. Selection Criteria - Special Class/ASD Class

1. Children with a diagnosis of a special educational need relevant to the particular Special Class or Autism in the case of an ASD class and who are currently enrolled in the school.
2. Children with a diagnosis of a special educational need relevant to the particular Special Class or Autism in the case of an ASD class and who have siblings currently enrolled in the school.
3. Children with a diagnosis of a special educational need relevant to the particular Special Class or Autism in the case of an ASD class and who qualify as resident for the purposes of this Admission Policy within the Parish of Achonry / Mullinabreena.
Note: Two of following documents dated within three months of the date of application must be supplied as proof of address: Bank Statement, Utility bill, e.g. electricity, or water.
4. Children with a diagnosis of a special educational need relevant to the particular Special Class or Autism in the case of an ASD class and who are not included within any of the preceding categories and whose parent is a member of the staff of the school.
5. Children with a diagnosis of a special educational need relevant to the particular Special Class or Autism in the case of an ASD class and who are not included within categories 1-4.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above, (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

The board of management will apply the five 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.

8. 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 student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—

an early intervention class, or an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;

- the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
(other than in relation to admission to a special class (not applicable at the moment as we do not have a Special Class) insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned) * This currently does not apply to Achonry N.S. as we are not a Special School and we do not have a Special Class
- 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; other than, in the case of the siblings of a student attending or having 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 annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

9. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Achonry N.S. 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.

10. 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 our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking 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)

11. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Achonry N.S. 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 and

(ii) whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

12. 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 Achonry N.S. 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.

13. 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;
- (iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of Section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

14. 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 Achonry N.S. 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 Achonry N.S. 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.

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.

15. 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 Admissions to School 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.

16. 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:

Parents complete an application form.

Note: The Board of Management currently operates a maximum average of 26 pupils per mainstream class, based on the staffing circular of the Department of Education and Skills Circular 18/2020

Selection Criteria - Senior Infants - 6th class

1. Children who are currently enrolled in a Special Class/ASD class in the school.

Achonry National School is not a Special School and does not have a Special Education Class.

2. Children who have siblings currently enrolled in the school or who are siblings of past pupils.

3. Children who qualify as a resident for the purposes of this Admission Policy within the Parish of Achonry / Mullinabreena

Note: Two of following documents dated within three months of the date of application must be supplied as proof of address: Bank Statement, Utility bill, e.g. electricity, or water.

4. Children who are not included within any of the preceding categories and whose parent is a member of the staff of the school.

5. Children who are not included in categories 1-4.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above, (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

The board of management will apply the five 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.

17. 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

Pupils may transfer to Achonry National School during the school year, subject to school policy, available space and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Science. Transfers to the school in the third term will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. In addition the following matters will be considered and deemed relevant:

1. The provision of stability for the child and ensuring if practicable that the child stays at his/her current school if the school is more proximate to where he/she lives.
2. The parent's reason for transfer. When a parent from another school in the vicinity applies for a place during term time the following procedure is followed:
 - A. The parent is advised to discuss the matter with the teacher and principal in their current school. A resolution to resolve any difficulties (if any) should be sought at this stage.
 - B. A meeting may then take place with the principal of Achonry National School at which their case is listened to. The principal will advocate the child staying in the current school.

If after (A) and (B) above the child wishes to apply for a place in Achonry National School, permission is sought for the principals of the two schools to discuss the matter. At this stage due account will be taken of the parent's reason for seeking the transfer. After due discussion, if the parent continues to seek a transfer, applications made to Achonry National School will then be accepted by the principal and dealt with in the usual way. The parents/guardian(s) will be asked to provide relevant information from the child's previous school including progress reports,

attendance records, behaviour records and any other assessments that are deemed relevant. Applications will be referred to the next meeting of the Board of Management. When a pupil has transferred to Achonry N.S. and has been registered in Achonry N.S. the school will then inform the child's previous school.

Parents complete an application form.

Note: *The Board of Management currently operates a maximum average of 26 pupils per mainstream class, based on the staffing circular of the Department of Education and Skills Circular 18/2020*

Selection Criteria

1. Children who are currently enrolled in a Special Class/ ASD class in the school.

Achonry National School is not a Special School and does not have a Special Education Class.

2. Children who have siblings currently enrolled in the school or who are siblings of past pupils.

3. Children who qualify as resident for the purposes of this Admission Policy within the Parish of Achonry / Mullinabreena.

Note: Two of following documents dated within three months of the date of application must be supplied as proof of address: bank statement, utility bill, gas bill, electricity bill or water bill.

4. Children who are not included within any of the preceding categories and whose parent is a member of the staff of the school.

5. Children who are not included in categories 1-4.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of these selection criteria categories above, (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

The board of management will apply the five 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.

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

The board of Achonry N.S. 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.

19. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students. 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.

Subject to the terms of the admission policy, we enrol pupils of other faiths or no faith in the school and accord due respect for their beliefs and practices in their own faith. Consultation with parents of these pupils takes place on enrolment. Each child is welcome to attend and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme. If parents have difficulty with this the Principal shall meet with them to see if an accommodation can be reached. Parents are welcome to view the religious programme taught - at its core is the commandment 'Love God and love your neighbour.' Sensitivity is always shown when pupils cannot participate in liturgical celebrations. The school cannot, however, undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith, nor can it provide supervision in a separate class environment during the religious education period. Children of other faiths who do not wish to participate in the Religious education class of the day will be assigned work to do in the classroom for the duration of the class.

20. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision 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 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: 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.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than 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.

21. 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, 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)

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)

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

Communication, Monitoring and Review

This policy was originally drawn up in April 2020. The most recent review took place in December 2023.

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to regular review. In accordance with the systematic cycle of review of policies adopted in Achonry National School. It will be reviewed initially after one year and then every three years, unless there is a compelling reason to review it earlier.