

Admission Policy of Solas Chríost National School

School Address: Cookstown Road, Belgard, Tallaght, Dublin 24. D24 C621

Roll number: 19541P

School Patron: Archbishop of Dublin

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on **7th September 2020**. 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 Solas Chríost National School admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

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

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Solas Chríost National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

"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 person 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 Solas Chríost National School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

MISSION STATEMENT

Solas Chríost National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. Our aim is to create a safe and secure school environment where all pupils are respected and encouraged to develop to their full potential. We aim to address the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of all pupils at all times.

VISION STATEMENT

- Solas Chríost National School is a Catholic co-educational school with a strong Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of school life, while respecting the diverse nature of the beliefs and cultures of all pupils in the school.
- In keeping with the Heritage of “Ard Mhuire” and “Solas Chríost”, the school actively promotes the concept of community, and so, promotes the partnership between the Church, the wider community, our families and the school community, thus ensuring the well-being of all pupils.
- The school aims to promote a team spirit of openness, consideration and co-operation among all staff members in order to ensure the optimum learning environment for each pupil. Teachers are encouraged to share good practice and to use digital technologies to enhance learning, teaching and assessment practices.

3. Admission Statement

Solas Chríost National School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

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

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, ‘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.

Solas Chríost National School is a Catholic denominational 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 it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Solas Chríost National School is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified. Please see the school Speech and Language Class Enrolment Policy for details.

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

Solas Chríost National School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a 2 classes (one Junior and one Senior) to provide an education exclusively for students with Developmental Language Disorder (Department of Education and Skills - Specific Speech and Language Disorder Classes)

Admissions to the School's Speech and Language Classes:

Introduction

Solas Chríost National School has two Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD) classes. The school has one Junior Class (for children from Junior Infant to 2nd Class level) and one Senior Class (for children from 3rd class to 6th class). Each class has a full-time teacher with a reduced pupil-teacher ratio of 7:1 as well as having designated time assigned to it by a speech and language therapist (SLT). A child must be at least 4 years of age on/before 1st September of the enrolment year. *'Eligible children may spend up to two years in such classes'* (DES circular 0038/2007). All offers of places to the class are subject to National Council for Special Education (NCSE) approval through the schools Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) as well as Department of Education (DES) approval.

Terminology

The term specific speech and language order (SSLD), specific speech and language impairment (SSLI) and 'Developmental Language Disorder' (DLD) are used interchangeably in this document to describe a child's speech and language presentation. Heretofore known as SSLI in Ireland, the term DLD is favoured by the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT, 2017) and is used in the following definition:

Definition

"Developmental Language Disorder' (DLD) describes "children likely to have language problems enduring into middle childhood and beyond, with a significant impact on everyday social interactions or educational progress" (Supporting Children with Developmental Language Disorder, IASLT, 2017)

The objectives of the language class:

1. To develop to optimal levels the child's academic and communication skills through intensive teaching and speech and language therapy.
2. To maximize parental involvement in the above process by maintaining open communication.
3. To ensure the child experiences meaningful integration within the school.
4. To maintain open communication with the school of origin/return and other professionals working with the child so that the speech and language class intervention will be of maximum benefit to the child.

What happens in the SSLD Class?

1. Pupils follow the regular primary school curriculum to the level at which they can access it.
2. Pupils will be taught Irish in the school unless the child has an exemption from Irish.
3. Teachers and Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) work together in the class to support the students' language learning in order that they can successfully access the curriculum. Individual goals for the student are developed together with the pupil, parent, teacher, and SLT.
4. Pupils will receive intensive group and/or one to one Speech and Language Therapy.
5. Pupils are integrated with their peers in mainstream classes for some subjects, school activities and break times.
6. Parent involvement is a key part of achieving students' goals.
7. Parents are required to attend parent-teacher meetings outside formal school hours. Meetings with the SLT may be held within school hours.

Criteria for Enrolment

The criteria for enrolment in special classes for pupils with specific speech and language difficulties has been set by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) as well as local criteria as set out below:

DES Criteria: (Circular 0038/2007)

A pupil enrolled in a special class for pupils with SSLD should meet each of the following criteria:

1. The pupil has been assessed by a psychologist on a standardized test on intellectual ability that places non-verbal ability within the average range (i.e. non-verbal IQ of 90 or above)
2. The pupil has been assessed by a speech and language therapist on a standardized test of speech and language development that places performances in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development at two standard deviations or more below the mean or at a generally equivalent level (i.e 2 standard deviations or below, at or below a standard score of 70).
3. The pupil's difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; where the pupil is affected to some degree by hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for the speech-related frequencies should be 40dB.
4. Emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes.

HSE Criteria:

5. Diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder must be established and evidence that a child has attended a recent episode of speech and language therapy (minimum 6 sessions).
6. Developmental Language Disorder must be the child's primary need.

Applicants who meet the above criteria will be prioritized at the Admissions Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting using the (AAC) Priority Rating Scale for Solas Chríost NS with reference to the information provided in the child's Social, Emotional and Behavioral Rating Form and the necessary documents required for referral outlined below.

Referral Process

Referral Packs will be available from the first working day of December - in the December previous to following August/September of enrolment. Referral Forms for the correct year of Referral will only be accepted. Incorrect referral form templates will be returned to the application referrer. Referrals to the SSLD class in Scoil Solas Chríost are accepted from speech and language therapists, psychologists, school principals or parents (in conjunction with the speech and language therapist working with the child), with the following information:

- Parent/Guardian signed consent form for the referral.
- Speech and Language referral form.
- School report detailing educational progress, behaviour, social skill and current school supports.
- Recent Speech and Language Therapy Assessment report, supporting a diagnosis of DLD (not less than 9 months old – on application closing date).
- Recent cognitive assessment report (within 2 years – of application closing date).
- Evidence that a child has attended a recent episode of speech therapy (minimum 6 sessions).
- A child's most recent school report card.
- Social, Emotional and Behavior Rating Form

It is recommended but not essential that applicants have completed one year in a recognized primary school.

The referring person is requested to send **three copies of all the reports and forms** to Solas Chríost NS on or before **the last weekday February** of the year of enrolment (Solas Chríost National School, Belgard, Tallaght, Dublin 24. D24 C521). All referral packs are dated and stamped in the school office and 1 copy will be passed straight over to the school's SLT. The SLT will compile all reports and send them to the school two weeks prior to the in-house pre-intake meeting. All professionals involved in the Admissions Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting will receive a copy of all reports two weeks in advance of that meeting.

Successful Candidates

Depending on the number of places available in the Speech and Language classes and based on the outcome of the prioritization which takes place at the AAC meeting, a final list of successful candidates and a priority waiting list will be drawn up and sent to the Board of Management (BOM) for approval. All candidates will be notified of the outcome by the school principal, in writing, within 10 working days of the AAC meeting. This will be cc'd to the person who referred the child. Successful applicants who wish to accept a placement must do so in writing, within five working days. The waiting list will remain open until the 30th of September of the year of enrolment. After that the waiting list will be closed and unsuccessful applicants will have to reapply again when the application process opens for the following school year – which will follow the speech and language enrolment policy and referral process in force at that time of further applications.

Concessionary Places

In instances where there is spare capacity in a SSLD class because of an insufficient number of eligible children, the Board of Management may offer a place to a maximum of two pupils, who do not meet the eligibility criteria but who could benefit from enrolment in the class for one school year, on a concessionary basis. Such placements must be supported by the recommendation of a speech and language therapist and /or psychologist. The question of the continued enrolment of these pupils for a second year can only be considered once all eligible pupils have been accommodated. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) through the local Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) will monitor such situations. A child who is offered a place through discretionary capacity may/may not be eligible to receive speech and language therapy.

What happens when a pupil leaves the SSLD Class?

Decisions regarding the discharge of a student from the SSLD class, rests with the school principal, the SSLD class teachers and the SLT. A child may attend the SSLD class for up to a maximum of two years. Placements in the SSLD class will be reviewed annually and whether or not a child is to be offered a second and final year in the class will depend on whether or not the child continues to meet all of the criteria as outlined in the 'criteria for enrolment' listed above. During a child's first year in the class, parents will be informed by the end of February whether or not their child is to be offered a second year in the class. The school team (principal, the SSLD class teachers, and the SLT) may recommend relevant onward referrals as appropriate. The school team will support families to organise a smooth transition from the SSLD Class to the child's school of origin/return.

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

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

The special class attached to Solas Chríost National School provides an education exclusively for students with Developmental Language Disorder (Department of Education and Skills - Specific Speech and Language Disorder Classes) and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class. Please see the school Speech and Language Class Enrolment Policy for details.

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:

Oversubscription, will be as follows:

- a) Siblings and stepsiblings of children already enrolled in the school and **children resident in the Springfield Parish Tallaght** (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking).
- b) Children of staff (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking).
- c) Children residing outside the parish (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking).

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:

In the event of two or more students being tied for a place, the oldest student will be given priority. If two applicants have the same date of birth, then a lottery will apply with an independent party present.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account

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

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; (other than in relation to admission to school's Speech and Language special classes insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and meets the criteria as set out in the Speech and Language Class Enrolment Policy.
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission; other than siblings of a student attending or having attended the school as per Enrolment Criteria.
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

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

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Solas Chríost National School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy

- The school's annual admission notice
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see [section 14](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#) below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in 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).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Solas Chríost National School 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.

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 Solas Chríost National School 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; or
- an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students. Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

- 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).

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 Solas Chríost National 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 Solas Chríost National School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education 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 as set out in Section 13.

Late applications will be considered on a first come first served basis.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows: (For Applications to the school's Speech and Language Class, please see the school's Speech and Language Class Enrolment Policy)

- They 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.

- They 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.
- They will be offered a place if there is place available.
- In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.
- The size of the classroom will be considered
- The number of pupils in the classroom will be considered
- Pupils may transfer to the school at any time
- A child's most recent Report Card, if applicable, must be provided as part of the application

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: (For Applications to the school's Speech and Language Class, please see the school's Speech and Language Class Enrolment Policy)

- They 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.
- They 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.
- They will be offered a place if there is place available.
- In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.
- The size of the classroom will be considered
- The number of pupils in the classroom will be considered
- Pupils may transfer to the school at any time
- A child's most recent Report Card, if applicable, must be provided as part of the application
- A child's Psychological and Educational Reports should be provided as part of the application to ensure the appropriate supports are put in place
- Applications for individual classes will be prioritised on a first come first served basis
- The child will not be able to start in the school until any necessary resources are available in the school: including SNA access, Appropriate Special Educational Needs teaching Provision, Special Educational Needs Equipment

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Solas Chríost National School 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.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

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) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

As Religious Instruction takes place at the same time 12:00pm, usually, in all classes:

- a. The student will remain in his own classroom.
- b. Work will be prescribed for the duration of the lesson.
- c. If the entire school are going to the church the student will also attend, to ensure adequate supervision for these students.
- d. If a class is going to the church e.g. to practise for Sacrament of Holy Communion, the student(s) will be placed in a different classroom

18. 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** 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

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.

