Admission Policy of St Patrick's Comprehensive School

School Address: Shannon, Co Clare

Roll number: 81007U

School Patron: The Minister for Education and Skills is the patron of Shannon Comprehensive and the denominational partner is the Bishop of Killaloe.

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 parent/guardians of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 11th September 2025. 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 St Patrick's Comprehensive 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

St Patrick's Comprehensive School is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Bishop of Killaloe and Limerick & Clare ETB.

Comprehensive Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Comprehensive Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened in 1966 on a greenfield site to meet the secondary education needs of the burgeoning population of the new town of Shannon. The values of LCETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited

traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Bishop of Killaloe are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of St Patrick's Comprehensive School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, our school St Patrick's Comprehensive School provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Our school St Patrick's Comprehensive School provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In St Patrick's Comprehensive School, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

History of St Patrick's Comprehensive School:

Established in 1966 as Ireland's first comprehensive school, St Patrick's is renowned locally, nationally and internationally as a centre of excellence for learning and educational development.
St Patrick's is an integral part of Shannon and makes its facilities available to the local community.
St Patrick's Comprehensive School has a proud tradition in innovation and development in education. The Curriculum Development Unit was established in St Patrick's Comprehensive school designing and developing education programmes like the Leaving Cert Applied which are now offered by other schools nationally.
St Patrick's has always responded to the changing needs of its student cohort by offering a wide range of programmes including:
Mainstream Junior and Leaving Certificate.
An optional Transition Year Programme.
The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.
The Level 2 Learning Programme at Junior Cycle.
ASD classes.
St Patrick's Comprehensive School is committed to continuing its long and proud tradition at the forefront of education both in Clare and nationally. We remain, as always, committed to

placing our students at the centre of all we do and responding creatively and with determination to meeting their needs so they can fulfil their potential.

3. Admission Statement

St Patrick's Comprehensive 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.

St Patrick's Comprehensive 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.

St Patrick's Comprehensive School 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.

St Patrick's Comprehensive School 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.

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

St Patrick's Comprehensive School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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/guardian 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

School with special education class(es)
The special classes in St Patrick's Comprehensive School provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 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.

Revised eligibility criteria for enrolment in an autism special class (Circular 0039/2025)

Professional report(s) outlining:

• Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multidisciplinary report)
AND
• A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports
AND
• Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same
AND
• A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism.

6. Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

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. Admission of students from Primary School

1. Students with siblings already in the school.
2. Students whose parent/guardians are staff of the school.
3. Students whose siblings were past pupils of the school.
4. Students whose parent/guardians/guardians were past pupils of the school.*
5. Students whose grandparent/guardians were past pupils of the school.*
6. Students within the school's catchment area, as defined by those who can access the school transport scheme to St Patrick's Comprehensive School.
7. Students from traditional feeder national schools (please see appendix 1 for list).

* Categories 4 & 5 above apply collectively to a maximum of 25% of all available space as set out in the school's annual admissions notice.

B. The following criteria will apply in allocating places to the three Autism classes:

1. Existing student in mainstream **who meet all eligibility requirements** prioritised in consultation with the SENO & the NCSE.
2. Students with siblings already in the school.
3. Students whose parent/guardians are staff of the school.
4. Students whose siblings were past pupils of the school.
5. Students whose parent/guardians/guardians were past pupils of the school.*
6. Students whose grandparent/guardians were past pupils of the school.*
7. Students within the school's catchment area, as defined by those who can access the school transport scheme to St Patrick's Comprehensive School.
8. Students from traditional feeder national schools (please see appendix 1 for list).

* Categories 5 & 6 above apply collectively to a maximum of 25% of all available space as set out in the school's annual admissions notice.

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:

Remaining places will be offered following random selection/lottery draw overseen by an independent supervisor; a waiting list will be compiled for any outstanding applicants according to where they were placed from the lottery draw. The waiting list will only operate for the academic year for which the application was made.

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:

(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 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

(d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parent/guardians;

(e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parent/guardians, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;

(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;(other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and (2) parent/guardians or grandparent/guardians of a student having attended the school- to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces in relation to (2) as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

(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.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St Patrick's Comprehensive School will be based on the following:

- Our 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 our annual admission notice for receiving applications

  (Please see section 15 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 16 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 St Patrick's Comprehensive 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 St Patrick's Comprehensive School 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/guardian 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.

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 provides for schools, for the purposes of facilitating the efficient admission of students, to share information with each other in respect of applications received, offers made and offers accepted.

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 Patrick's Comprehensive 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 Patrick's Comprehensive 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.

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.

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.
This school shall admit each student seeking admission if a vacancy exists in accordance with this policy.
If a vacancy does not exist, the student's name will be placed on a waiting list for the year and parents informed in writing of place on list.

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.
If vacancy exists applicant will be admitted in accordance with this policy, if not name will be placed on waiting list and parent informed in writing of place on list.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St Patrick's Comprehensive School 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.

17. Statement on opting out of Religious Education

St Patrick's Comprehensive School offers religious education in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, religious education supports the 'multi-denominational' aspect of our school's ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.
In this context it is important to understand the distinction between 'religious education' and 'religious instruction':
Religious education is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
Religious instruction is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.
Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

18.Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent/guardian 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/guardian 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.

Ratified by the Board of Management at meeting on the 19th September 2025.

Signed:

Sean Ruane, Chair **Mary Costello, Secretary**

Appendix 1:

List of traditional feeder national schools.

Ballycar National School

Clonmoney National School

Cratloe National School

Gaelscoil Donncha Rua, Shannon

Kilkishen National School

Kilmurry National School

Newmarket National school

Sixmilebridge National School

St Aidan's National School, Shannon

St Conaire's National school, Shannon

St John's National School, Shannon

St Senan's National School, Shannon

St Tola's National School, Shannon

Stonehall National School