

Admissions Policy of SCOIL URSULA

School Address: Strandhill Road, Sligo

Roll number: 18979F

School Patron: Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin

Trustee: Le Chéile Schools Trust

1. Introduction

This Admissions 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 [date]. 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 Scoil Ursula admission process are set out in the school's annual admissions notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admissions process for the school year concerned.

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

The application form for admissions 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

Scoil Ursula is a Catholic co-educational primary school under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust.

The purpose of our Le Chéile / Ursuline school is to provide an education that acknowledges and affirms the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God. Our school seeks to build a learning community that welcomes, and witnesses to, the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the Le Chéile Charter. The school draws on the richness of the religious and cultural heritage of the past and the charism of St. Angela de Merici, founder of the Ursuline Order who began this school.

The general objectives of all Le Chéile schools include: -

- **Welcome** recognises the unique dignity and worth of each person.
- **Wisdom** is the pursuit of a greater understanding and appreciation of the world.

- **Witness** comes from the expression of Gospel values, in everyday life, and recognises that every person is made in the image and likeness of God.

As a Catholic school our primary objective is to participate in the evangelising mission of the Church by fostering a school community where gospel values are lived and taught. Ursuline Education strives to nurture a community where Christian values are respected, lived and taught.

Our Ursuline philosophy is based on the teachings of St Angela which emphasise the following touchstones of Ursuline Education:

- Personal relationship with God.
- The holistic development of each individual.
- The dignity and uniqueness of each person.
- The importance of courtesy and kindness.
- The fostering of courage and confidence to live in justice and truth.
- The encouragement of a caring and respectful attitude towards self, others and the environment.

The ethos of Ursuline schools is Catholic. All are expected to have respect for that ethos whilst also respecting the religious beliefs of others. Religious Education has been central to the mission of the Ursuline Congregation since its foundation. Accordingly, religious instruction, liturgical services and prayer are part of daily life in the school and a high level of participation from students is encouraged.

Scoil Ursula operates under the patronage of the Bishop of Elphin.

“Catholic Ethos” 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 Catholic pupils in the Catholic faith,

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 Scoil Ursula 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.

Our Mission Statement outlines our wish to provide a learning environment, which is conducive to the academic, social, physical, psychological and moral development of the children under our care. To this end three general aims permeate our educational process:

- To enable the children to live full lives as children.
- To equip them to avail of further education.
- To prepare them to live full and objective lives as adults.

Underpinning our educational philosophy, and with particular reference to our pupils' moral development, is the school's Catholic Ethos and Ursuline Philosophy of which we hold as central and integral to school life. We welcome enrolments from pupils of other religious persuasions or no religion at all. We embrace and cherish all children equally and respect their rights to whatever religious beliefs or absence of beliefs they have.

3. Admissions Statement

Scoil Ursula 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.

Scoil Ursula 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.

Scoil Ursula will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

Scoil Ursula will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

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

Scoil Ursula welcomes applications from parent(s)/guardians of students with special educational needs.

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

Scoil Ursula is 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.

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 admissions notice:

Selection Criteria:

1. Siblings of pupils already attending the school.
2. Children of school staff.
3. Children living within the parish boundary.
4. Children of past pupils of the school (up to 25% only)
5. Children living outside the parish boundary.

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:

Priority will be given to children within the particular category using the criteria of age and geographical proximity.

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
- (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
- (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. Two exceptions apply as follows:
 - i. Selection Criterion 1. above i.e. siblings of a pupil attending the school
 - ii. Selection Criterion 4. above i.e. children of past pupils of the school up to a maximum of 25%.
- (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 admissions 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 Scoil Ursula will be based on the following:

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

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 by email 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 by email 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 Scoil Ursula, 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.

Applicants should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.

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 Scoil Ursula 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 admissions 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.
- (v) The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility. An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

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.

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 Scoil Ursula 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 Scoil Ursula is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admissions 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 admissions 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 a year group other than Junior Infants and/or to any class group during the school year

Where parents wish to make an application for their son/daughter to a class group other than Junior Infants or during the school year, they should in the first instance fill in an online Application Form on www.scoilursula.com. An offer of a place can only be made if there is space in the year group in question. A decision on whether a place can be offered will be conveyed to the parents within 21 days of the initial application.

Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant to a class group other than Junior Infants or during the school year.

The parents must confirm their acceptance in writing of an offer of a place within two weeks of the date of the offer of a place.

In accepting an offer of admission the parents must indicate—

- (i) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

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

Parents should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.

Circumstances in which offers of a place in a class group other than Junior Infants or during the school year may not be made or may be withdrawn:

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by the school:-

- (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 within two weeks of the date of the offer of a place;
- (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;
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out above;
- (v) the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education. The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility; or
- (vi) The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility. An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

Oversubscription to the year group other than Junior Infants:

In the event of there being more applications to the class group other than Junior Infants than places available, a waiting list of students, whose application for admission to the particular class group has been refused, will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list will be in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy see Section 6 above. With exception to Section 7(g), the date of receipt of a properly completed Application Form will determine the position on this waiting list within each of the criteria. In the unlikely event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories set out in Section 6 above, then the position on the waiting list (for places in a class group other than Junior Infants) will be determined by a lottery process overseen by the Principal and Deputy Principal.

Offers of any subsequent places in the class group other than Junior Infants that become available during the school year 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.

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

The board of Scoil Ursula 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. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students where the parents have 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.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of 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 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.

19. Ratification & Communication

The Board of Management reviewed and reratified this policy on the 9th of December, 2022.

Signed: _____, (Chairperson, BOM)

The policy is communicated to the members of the BOM and is available to the wider school community through the school website. All Scoil Ursula policies are available for inspection in the school.