

# Scoil Ursula

## ■ Title

### Admissions Policy

## ■ Introductory Statement

*This policy was formulated as a result of a review of the previous policy carried out by the school staff in collaboration with the Board of Management during the 3<sup>rd</sup> term of the school year 2010-2011 and the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> term of 2011-2012. A draft was written up by the School Principal and published on the school website. Submissions were invited from interested parties i.e. parents, board members and staff. As a result of these collaborations a final draft was prepared and ratified by the board on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, 2012.*

*This policy was updated in October 2015 and ratified on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 2015.*

## ■ Rationale

Section 15(2) (d) Education Act, 1998 provides that a Board shall publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school. The enrolment policy is central to the school's working and development. It was decided to set down criteria and procedures for the enrolment of new pupils to ensure the smooth administration of admissions to Scoil Ursula.

## ■ Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

It is 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 useful 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 lack of beliefs they have. We expect the same respect to be accorded to the children of the majority Catholic faith. Section 7(3)(c) Equal Status Act, 2000 states that an educational establishment does not discriminate if it admits children of one particular religious denomination in preference to others, or if it refuses to admit a child who is not of that denomination, provided any such refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. It is our policy not to discriminate against prospective enrolees on the grounds of gender, family status, age, disability, race and the travelling community.

## ■ Aims

- To ensure that all pupils are properly enrolled in an open, transparent manner and in accordance with the procedures set out in the policy.
- To put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered and to ensure that these criteria are informed by our Ethos, our Mission Statement & current legislation.
- To make parents/carers aware of our philosophy, ethos and rules governing the conduct expected of their children while in our care.
- To ensure that enrolees are not discriminated against on any of the grounds stated above.
- To inform parents about the school, its programmes, activities, and procedures.
- To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application.

## ■ General Information

Name : Scoil Ursula

Address: Strandhill Road, Sligo.

Tel. No.: 0719162835

- Scoil Ursula is Catholic in denomination and is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin.
- Scoil Ursula is a vertical co-educational primary school catering for boys and girls in classes from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class.
- Scoil Ursula follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and operates within the regulations laid down by the DES.
- Scoil Ursula depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the DES

## ■ Guidelines (*content of policy*)

### GENERAL POLICY :

It is generally the policy of Scoil Ursula to enrol its new pupils once a year. This is usually done at the beginning of the school year in order to minimise disruption and ensure smooth administration.

### ENROLMENT REQUIREMENTS :

Scoil Ursula is a Catholic school that welcomes all applications from parents to enrol children regardless of race, religious belief or lack of religious belief. However, there are a number of stipulations, some Department initiated and others school based, which we insist upon to make for smooth administration and a harmonious school environment.

- (1) All enrolees must be **at least** four years of age before attending school and not older than six.  
**The Board of Management of Scoil Ursula strongly recommend that children should have attained the age of 4 years by the 31st March in the year of intended enrolment. This is to ensure that children are old enough to begin formal mainstream schooling.**
- (2) All enrolees must be registered by having the official school enrolment form (Appendix A) filled and signed by their parents or guardians.
- (3) Completion of a school enrolment application form is an acceptance of the Scoil Ursula Code of Conduct
- (4) All enrolees must have their school uniform to attend school.
- (5) All enrolees must have the appropriate textbooks and necessary materials before attending

school.

- (6) Enrolment of students with special needs will be deferred until the appropriate support services are put in place.

### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE:**

Pupils are generally enrolled for the forthcoming school year during the month of February for attendance in September. Enrolment forms, Code of Behaviour, booklists and any other relevant information are available to the parents or guardians of prospective enrolees on our school website and from the school directly. An Open Day is arranged in early February and the parents of prospective enrolees are invited to come with their children to view the facilities, meet the teachers and sample some activities in an informal setting. The Open Day is advertised in the local media and enrolment forms are available on the day. These are filled and signed and returned to the school with an original birth/adoption certificate before the February Mid-Term Break. Applications can also be made online at [www.scoilursula.com](http://www.scoilursula.com)

The closing date for applications will be two weeks from the date of the Open Day. This is to encourage prospective parents to enrol their children in a timely fashion and also enable the school to apply for extra resources if there is such a need.

Where the school requires further information, the application will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information, has been received. The school will inform the applicants of the information and documentation required.

### **DECISION MAKING PROCESS:**

The completion of an application form or the placement of your child's name on an intake or waiting list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school. The Board of Management of the school will make a decision in respect of an application within 21 days of the closing date for applications and parents will be informed by email (Appendix B). No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accents, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious/political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.

### **ENROLMENT CRITERIA:**

While recognising the rights of the parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of Scoil Ursula also respects the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of the children.

To assist the school in circumstances of overcrowding, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind Department of Education and Science guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions.

Other factors that may be considered are:

- Size of and available space in classrooms.
- Educational needs of children of a particular age.
- Multi-grade classes.
- Presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs.
- Department of Education & Science class size directives.
- Appropriate Supports and Resources are available.
- Time of school year.

- Health & Safety Concerns regarding Staff and Children.

With regard to criteria for enrolment, the priority order in which children will be accepted, in situations where Scoil Ursula is oversubscribed and/or where the child's needs cannot be met under the school's current provision of support services and facilities e.g. for a child with Special Needs, is as follows:

1. Siblings of pupils who currently attend or formerly attended the school.
2. Catholic children living within the parish boundary.
3. Other children living within the parish boundary.
4. Children of current staff, including ancillary staff.
5. Children of past pupils of the school.
6. Catholic children living outside the parish boundary.
7. Other children living outside the parish boundary.

In the event that there are more applicants within any category than there are available places, priority will be given to children within the particular category using the criteria of age and geographical proximity.

#### **ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Scoil Ursula promotes the inclusion of children with Special Needs and has successfully integrated many pupils with varying needs into mainstream education. The success of our inclusion programme is fully dependant on acquiring the services necessary for the child's special needs to be catered for and for there to be no significant negative impact on the educational opportunities of other children. It is therefore our policy to ascertain through our Enrolment Form, whether or not a prospective enrollee has Special Needs. Where there is a Special Need, necessitating extra services, all relevant information and reports will be requested and an application will be made to the (NCSE) for the necessary Resource Teaching Hours and/or Special Needs Assistant access.

The Board of Management (BOM) of Scoil Ursula upholds the constitutional right of children with Special Needs to be provided with the supports and/or physical infrastructure necessary to integrate them appropriately into mainstream education. It also endorses the constitutional right of **all** of its children to an equal and appropriate education in a safe learning environment and free from serious disruption. Therefore, in cases where the Boards feels that the child's special needs cannot be adequately met from the Special Needs provisions and/or physical infrastructure available in the school or that other pupils' educational opportunities will be severely compromised, it reserves the right not to proceed with an enrolment.

#### **REFUSAL TO ENROL ON GROUNDS OF 'EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES':**

The BOM reserves the right to refuse enrolment in exceptional circumstances e.g.

- a) As per previous paragraph.
- b) The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education.
- c) In the opinion of the BOM, a pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.

## **RIGHT OF APPEAL:**

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 provides for a right of appeal against a decision to refuse enrolment. Parents/guardians are informed of their right to appeal a decision of the BOM in relation to a refusal to enrol in the Letter of Regret (Appendix C). The Principal has responsibility for preparing a response for the Appeals Committee if and when an appeal is initiated.

## **PUPIL TRANSFER:**

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time subject to the school's enrolment policy and available space. 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. When a pupil has transferred to Scoil Ursula and has been registered, the school will inform the child's previous school.

## **APPROVAL OF PATRON:**

Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998 requires a Board of Management to publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron, considers appropriate

- the policy of the school concerning enrolment to and participation in the school including those with special needs
- the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students

The Board of Management must ensure that the principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with.

This policy and the Code of Behaviour, which deals with matters of suspension and expulsion, are published on the school website and are available in the school.

## **■ Success Criteria**

Our success criteria will be based on the achievement of our objectives. We will use staff observation and parental feedback as our benchmark for success or otherwise of the policy. The effectiveness of the policy will be judged on the ease of administration with regard to pupil intake.

## **■ Roles and Responsibility**

The Board of Management and the school principal will be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the policy. Any feedback received will be recorded and any problems that arise will be taken into account for the purposes of evaluation and review.

## **■ Timeframe for Implementation**

This policy will be implemented from November 2015

## **■ Timeframe for Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2018 or sooner if required.

## ■ Responsibility for Review

The school principal and post-holders in conjunction with the Board of Management will be responsible for reviewing the policy.

## ■ Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

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.

## ■ Revision History

**0: Original Document as of May 2012**

**1: Significant changes (other than grammatical errors) made during policy review September 2015**

- Under Introductory Statement:
  - Added in: This policy was updated in October 2015.
- Under General Information:
  - Deleted the name of the Bishop of Elphin
  - **Deleted:** Scoil Ursula is a 19-teacher school, including administrative principal, fourteen mainstream class teachers, Learning Support, Resource and Language teachers.
- Under General Policy:
  - Deleted: The only exceptions to this position are in cases of pupils who are moving into the area and transferring from another school or become four years of age before the 30th of September and be deemed mature and capable enough in the opinion of the school authorities to commence primary schooling  
In the case of (b) above parents are still required to fulfil the enrolment conditions and procedures as set out below.
- Under Enrolment Requirements:
  - Added: The Board of Management of Scoil Ursula strongly recommend that children should have attained the age of 4 years by the 31st March of the year of enrolment. This is to ensure that children are old enough to begin formal mainstream schooling.
  - Deleted: (3) Parents or guardians must read and sign up to the Scoil Ursula Code of Conduct.
  - Added: Completion of a school enrolment application form is an acceptance of the Scoil Ursula Code of Conduct
- Under Application Procedure:
  - Paragraph 1: Deleted: sent out
    - Added: available
    - Added: The closing date for applications will be two weeks from the date of the Open Day. This is to encourage our prospective parents to enrol their children in a timely fashion and also enable to the school to apply for extra

resources if there is such a need.

- Paragraph 2: Deleted: PPS numbers are not requested at the time of application unless an application for resources is being made to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) at that time.
- Under Decision Making Process:
  - Deleted: Open Day or receipt of such application and parents will be informed in writing or by email (see Appendices B & C)
  - Added: the closing date for applications and parents will be informed by email (Appendix B).
- Under Enrolment of Children with Special Needs:
  - Added: Needs
  - Deleted: degrees of disability
- Under Approval of Patron:
  - Deleted: Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998 requires a Board of Management to publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with. This policy and the Code of Behaviour, which deals with matters of suspension and expulsion, are published on the school website and are available in the school.
  - Added: Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998 requires a Board of Management to publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron, considers appropriate
    - the policy of the school concerning enrolment to and participation in the school including those with special needs
    - the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students
  - The Board of Management must ensure that the principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with.
  - This policy and the Code of Behaviour, which deals with matters of suspension and expulsion, are published on the school website and are available in the school.
- Under Timeframe for Implementation
  - Added: November 2015
  - Deleted: September, 2012
- Under Timeframe for Review
  - Deleted: 2014
  - Added: 2018 or sooner if required
- Under Ratification and Communication
  - Deleted: Scoil Ursula does not have adequate resources to disseminate all of its policies to all the concerned members of the wider school community
  - Added: school website
  - Deleted: parents' representatives on the BOM
- Under Appendix:
  - Attached the updated enrolment form in use in the school

# Appendix A

## Enrolment Form

The Department of Education and Skills has developed an electronic database of primary school pupils called the Primary Online Database (POD) which involves schools maintaining and returning data on pupils to the Dept. at individual pupil level on a live system. This information will be used to evaluate progress and outcomes of pupils at primary level, to validate school enrolment returns for grant payment and teacher allocation purposes, to follow up on pupils who do not make the transfer from primary to post primary level and for statistical reporting. The database will hold data on all primary school pupils. The database will also contain, **on an optional basis**, information on the pupil's religion and on their ethnic or cultural background. The data required for POD is marked with an **asterisk \*** and will only be uploaded to POD **if your child is enrolled**. All other data we need for the efficient running of the school. **In order to assist with the gathering of data please complete the form in CAPITAL LETTERS and return to the school. This form will be retained by the school.**

\*Pupil Forename: \_\_\_\_\_ \*Pupil

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (DD/MM/YYYY) *As per our enrolment policy the Board of Management of Scoil Ursula strongly recommend that children should have attained the age of 4 years by the 31st March of the year of enrolment. This is to ensure that children are old enough to begin formal mainstream schooling.*

\*Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ (M/F)

\*Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

\*PPS

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Religion: \_\_\_\_\_ Do you consent to uploading data relating to religion to POD? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Is one of the pupil's mother tongues (i.e. language spoken at home) Irish or English? Yes/No

\*To which ethnic or cultural background group does your child belong (please tick one):

White Irish  Irish Traveller  Roma  Any other White Background  Black African  Any other Black Background  Chinese  Any other Asian background  Other (inc. mixed background)  No Consent

Do you consent to uploading data relating to ethnicity to POD Yes [ ] No [ ]

Name of Playschool/Pre-School attended \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Date of Entry to Scoil Ursula \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ (MM/DD/YYYY) Proposed Class of Entry: \_\_\_\_\_

**Has your child any special needs, been under the care of the local early intervention team or availed of services from the HSE eg: Speech and Language Therapy/ Occupational Therapy etc.?**

Yes [ ] No [ ]

*If yes please inform the school as soon as possible and provide all relevant documentation. The school may need to apply for extra services before proceeding with the enrolment.*

### FAMILY DETAILS

Name of Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Mother's Maiden name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Father: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of siblings attending/attended Scoil Ursula:

Emergency Contact Name 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE TURN OVER**



Any

Health

Issues:

**In the event of an emergency it is school policy to seek medical attention. In the event of a serious accident, your child will be brought to casualty, where none of the above mentioned persons are contactable.**

**TRANSFER FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL**

Previous School: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please enclose relevant documents, i.e.: Reports, assessment results, attendance figures, behaviour reports etc..*

Did your child/ren attend Scoil Ursula before? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

***In order to reflect accurately the level of need of our pupils the school needs to know the appropriate financial state particular to each family. This information will be confidential to the school and will be used to determine the level of grants from the Department of Education for school books. (Free Book Scheme/Loan Rental Scheme).***

**PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX: ONE BOX ONLY**

1. Your family is dependent mainly on social welfare payments.
2. Your family is on low income from employment. (These families are likely to be in receipt of Family Income Supplement and/or benefit from the back to school clothing and footwear scheme.)
3. Your family are experiencing financial hardship due to certain circumstances in the home.
- (If necessary contact the school).
4. Not in need

**By signing below you are agreeing to the following statements:**

- I am aware that this is a Roman Catholic School
- I am aware that the Catholic ethos permeates the school day and is intertwined in all school activities
- I accept the rules, regulations and school policies in place in Scoil Ursula (see the Code of Behaviour and School Policy documents)
- I give my child permission to take part in out of school activities e.g.: workshops, sports, outings etc.
- I give permission to have my child's photograph (unnamed) to be included in projects, school website, blogs, publications etc. involving life in our school
- I have read the schools Internet Acceptable Use Policy and agree to the terms and conditions in it
- I understand that it is school policy to seek medical attention in the event of an emergency
- I understand that in the event of a serious accident, my child will be brought to hospital, where none of the above mentioned persons are not contactable
- My child is allowed to take part in the Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme and the Stay Safe Programme

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**A copy of the child's Birth/Adoption Certificate must be given to the school before enrolment is complete.**

**If the child is Catholic a copy of the child's Baptism certificate must also be given before enrolment is complete.**

# **Appendix B**

## **Re.: Scoil Ursula Enrolment Application 20XX-20XX**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,  
Thank you for your application to enrol your child \_\_\_\_\_ in Scoil Ursula in September, 20XX.

We are delighted to inform you that your application has been successful and we have a place for your child. We look forward to welcoming him/her to our school in September.

Please contact the school within the next 10 days to confirm that you are availing of this place. When places are limited, if your child's place is not confirmed, it will be offered to the next child on the list.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tony Gallagher (Principal)

# **Appendix C**

**Re.: Scoil Ursula Enrolment Application 2012-2013**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your application to enrol your child  
\_\_\_\_\_ in Scoil Ursula in September, 20XX.

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer your child(ren) a place(s) at this time due to the following reasons.

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 provides for a right of appeal against a decision to refuse enrolment. The procedure is set out on the DES website 'www.education.ie' and in DES Circular 22/2002.

I regret that we are not in a position to provide you with a place(s) at this time and I wish you well in finding a suitable alternative. If the current situation changes for any reason, we will get in touch with you again.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

Tony Gallagher (Principal)