



***F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody, Co. Wexford***

## **Admissions Policy** ***Updated May 2017***

**This Admissions Policy is prepared as part of the School Plan under Section 21 of the Education Act 1998.**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Board of Management of F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody, Co. Wexford, is hereby setting out its Admissions Policy in accordance with the provisions of the *Education Act, 1998, Section 15, 2 (d)* and it trusts that by doing so, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters.

F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody, is a voluntary, co-educational Day Secondary School and is open to all students who wish to enrol. Our policy is one of integration and we are committed to making provision for those students who have learning or physical difficulties. Should there be applications in excess of the number of places we can offer, places will be offered in accordance with the criteria set in **Allocations of Places** section.

F.C.J. Secondary School admits students into 1<sup>st</sup> Year who have satisfactorily completed the eight-year Primary School Curriculum as laid down by the Department of Education & Skills or its equivalent if from abroad.

Students should have the ability to follow the Department of Education syllabus for Second Level Schools. For 1<sup>st</sup> Year students, this means the ability to embark on the First Year Programme leading to the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

With regard to the admission of students to F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody, the Board of Management affirms its statutory obligation under The Equal Status Act 2000.

### **OPERATING CONTEXT**

**The school's Admissions Policy is governed by:**

- Regulations laid down by the Department of Education & Skills
- The rights of the Trustees as set out in the Education Act.
- The religious and educational philosophy of the F.C.J. Society.
- Available resources and funding. The Board of Management shall have regard for DES regulations concerning class size, staffing provisions and

other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, such as physical space or the health and welfare of children.

- A child's being able to demonstrate that she/he has the ability to avail of the curriculum, which is the primary service provided by the school. In circumstances where such participation is unduly difficult, consideration will be given to reducing the amount of the standard curriculum for that student up to a maximum of 30% of the time tabled hours.
- The financial and teaching resources of the school being provided by a combination of contribution by parents, DES grants and teacher allocations. The school depends on grants and teacher resources provided by the D.E.S. At all times, implementation of the School Plan and school policy must have regard to the resources and funding available. The school seeks extra funding in the form of a voluntary contribution from parents on an annual basis in order to supplement D.E.S. funding. These contributions are used to provide additional resources and facilities for the education of the students.
- The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the DES, which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.

## **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES**

F.C.J. Secondary School supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation in the school and parental choice.

In the current year, there are three Guidance Counsellors and a learning support/resource team of teachers on staff. The number of teaching staff is linked to student numbers and may consequently vary each year. Students follow a three-year Junior Cycle and a Senior Cycle, which includes an optional Transition Year.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) may express interest in enrolment in writing at any time. Letters of enquiry neither constitute enrolment nor entitlement to enrolment. The letters of enquiry will be placed on a mailing list and these families will be sent notification by post prior to the formal Application for Enrolment Night in November. No responsibility is accepted by the school for ensuring that notification is received by any potential applicant.

In the Autumn of each year, the School writes to local national schools informing them of the date of the Application for Enrolment Night and requesting that they give enclosed cards to all prospective applicants to invite them to attend.

Open Days, parish announcements, parish newsletters, advertisements in local media, the school's web site and other relevant forms of information release are used to publicise the Application for Enrolment Night.

Application must be made on the official school application form. Applications after the date of the formal Application for Enrolment Night will be considered Late Applications and will be placed on a waiting list.

The following information is required from parents on acceptance of a place:

- (a) Student's name, date of birth, address, the long version of the birth certificate and Students PPS No.
- (b) Parents'/guardians' names, addresses, telephone numbers (home, mobile and emergency) and Signature.
- (c) Details of relevant medical conditions or home circumstances
- (d) Details of disabilities or any special educational needs of student, including

- any Educational/Psychological Assessments/Reports
- (e) Religion.
- (f) The Acceptance of The Code of Behaviour Form, signed by parent(s)/guardian(s) and student.
- (g) Previous schools attended by the student.
- (h) Relevant information, if applicable, regarding student custody, access arrangements and any Court Orders pertaining to the student.

## **DECISION MAKING**

The decisions relating to applications are made by the Principal of the school in accordance with the published criteria in the school's Admissions Policy.

**The final decision with regard to enrolment of students in F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody, and with regard to all matters covered in this Admissions Policy, lies with the Board of Management. The Board of Management will review this policy from time to time.**

## **PARENT MEETINGS**

### **Application for Enrolment Night**

Prospective students and their parent(s) / guardian(s) are invited to an evening meeting in the school in November of the year prior to admission to 1<sup>st</sup> Year.

At the Application for Enrolment Night, the ethos of the school and its expectations of students and parents/guardians are outlined. The School Prospectus is given to parents. They are also given the Enrolment Application Form and a copy of the Admissions Policy. The Principal explains the school's Admissions Policy, including the procedures and the criteria to be followed in selecting applicants if the year group is over-subscribed. The Pastoral Care system of the school and provision for students who may have learning difficulties is outlined. The Principal guides parents through the completion of the application and time is given to complete the Form. All forms are then collected by the school. The meeting ends with an inter-active presentation informing students of the optional subject choices. The Principal is available at the end to answer any questions that parents may have regarding their child starting secondary school.

Attendance of parent/guardian and the prospective student is a requirement for admission to the school.

## **ALLOCATION OF PLACES**

**DES Rule: Secondary school students must be aged 12 on the 1st of January in the calendar year following the child's entry into First Year (Long Versions of Birth Certificates will be requested).**

Thirty students per class is the maximum number recommended by the DES. The school generally operates 6 classes giving a total of 180.

If the school is over-subscribed, offers of places will be made to applicants in the following order:

- Brothers and sisters of students who have attended or are attending F.C.J. Bunclody
- Children of the current staff of the school
- Pupils **from the current academic year's 6<sup>th</sup> class from the** local area schools in the following order:

1. Our Lady of Lourdes NS., Bunclody
2. Carrigduff NS., Bunclody
3. Kilmyshall NS.
4. Tombrack NS.
5. Castledockrell NS.
6. Kiltytealy NS.
7. Ballindaggin NS.
8. Kildavin NS.
9. Clonegal NS.
10. Ballyroebuck NS.
11. Scoil Naomh Maodhog, Ferns
12. St. Edan's NS., Ferns

Should there be insufficient places to accommodate all applicants from the schools listed above, an independently monitored random selection process will determine which remaining applicants in the highest ranked school listed will be offered places.

**If capacity permits**, remaining places will then be offered to other students, on a random selection basis. The random selection process will be independently monitored.

The school will write to all applicants who do not receive an offer asking them if they wish to be placed on a Waiting List. Applicants who wish to be placed on such a list must confirm this in writing within eight days of the posting of the letter. Further offers of places will be made as they become available in the order of the original selection process detailed above.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The Board of Management welcomes pupils with special educational needs. The Board will do all that is reasonably possible to secure the necessary resources to meet the needs of these pupils. The Board of Management reserves the right to postpone admission until such resources have been provided by the Department of Education and Skills.

This school is an inclusive school in its policy and in its operation it welcomes all students. The school recognises that the range of Special Educational Needs covers a wide spectrum and will endeavour to provide an appropriate second level education, subject to the supports approved by the N.C.S.E. and provided by the Department of Education and Skills.

The Principal will meet the parents/guardians to discuss the student's needs and the school's capability to meet those needs. The school has a right to request a copy of a student's medical/psychological report/Individual Education Report, if available and/or

- to request immediate assessment;

- to request from the DES the necessary resources, prior to enrolment, for the needs of the student e.g. special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, learning support, transport or other.

Should it prove impossible to provide the necessary resources, based on the foregoing, to provide for the needs of the student, the Board reserves the right to withhold an application for a place in the school until appropriate resources are put in place.

Information concerning students with special needs will be given to class, remedial and support teachers at the beginning of the academic year, enabling staff to provide appropriate and immediate support.

### **LATE APPLICATIONS**

- Students who apply late will be placed on a waiting list and will be considered Late Applicants.
- Late applications will be considered only after all on time applicants have been considered in accordance with the criteria for admission.
- Placement on such a list does not guarantee a place in the school.
- All late applications will be considered on a First Come First Served basis.

### **OFFER & ACCEPTANCE OF PLACES**

1. Offers of a place are posted to parents.
2. Applicants who are being offered places will be invited to confirm in writing acceptance or otherwise within eight days of the posting of the offer.
3. A place is confirmed when
  - (a) the Acceptance Form is completed and signed,
  - (b) Long Birth Certificate and other required documents are submitted
4. Failure to comply with either of the above 3 (a) &(b) will result in the offer being withdrawn.
5. **Where a place for a student has been accepted in more than one school, parents will be asked to withdraw their acceptance from the other school or schools within three days. Failure to do so will result in the withdrawal of the offer of a place in F.C.J. Bunclody**
6. In compliance with the Education Act, 1998, unsuccessful applicants will receive notice of the school's refusal to enrol them within 21 days of the Application for Enrolment Evening.

### **APPEALS**

Parents/guardians of applicants who are not offered a place in F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody, may appeal the decision to the Board of Management in the first instance and subsequently, if necessary, to the Department of Education & Skills, in accordance with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The Board of Management may be contacted by letter addressed to The Secretary of the Board at the school address.

Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, gives parents the right to appeal refusal to enrol. Queries regarding appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, can be directed to the Appeals Administration Unit, c/o Post-Primary Administration Section, Portlaoise Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly (Telephone 0506-24330 or 0506 – 24327).

## ASSESSMENT

Pupils are assessed after they have accepted the offer of a place. The purpose of this assessment is to help the school establish the educational needs of each child, determine academic strengths, evaluate the special educational needs of incoming students and to assign students to classes.

The school conducts two assessments in the second term of the year of entry. These tests are held on specified dates in the school, of which parents are notified by post. Attendance at the test is an integral part of the admissions procedure. If, in exceptional cases, e.g. Confirmation, a student is unable to attend, the Principal must be contacted and an alternative date will be set to take the tests.

The Principal visits or makes contact with the primary schools to discuss the results of the assessment tests and to gain a fuller profile of the student with a view to facilitating the transition into second level school.

## ADMISSION TO OTHER THAN FIRST YEAR

The normal and usual point of entry to the school is First Year. It is only in **exceptional circumstances** that a student is accepted into any other year group.

The school will only make an offer of a place in a year other than 1st Year after taking due cognisance of the best interests of those who constitute the pupil body of the school. The school management will have due regard to the effect on class size, the dynamic of a particular group, discipline etc. The school will only make an offer of such a place where it is considered advisable to do so. This applies also to those who have left the school and who subsequently wish to return to the school.

The school will also consider whether the move is in the best interests of the student under the following criteria:

- Consequences of transfer
- Subject choices/levels
- Reason for move.
- No pupil is admitted to a year other than 1<sup>st</sup> Year without a satisfactory reference from the Principal of his/her current secondary school
- The school will not normally accept students into final year Leaving Certificate or final year Junior Certificate Programmes
- Second level schools in the local area all operate under the Department of Education & Skills and have access to apply for the same supports and facilities. They are governed by the same legislation and so only students with sound educational reasons for changing from their first choice of school will be considered. The Board of F.C.J. Bunclody will require full disclosure of information with supporting documentation where a student seeking to transfer from another school has been suspended or expelled. The Board will have to be satisfied that to admit such a student is not likely to undermine the characteristic spirit of the school or expose the staff or students of the school to the risk of harm to their health or safety.

## **PROCEDURES FOR ADMISSION TO OTHER THAN FIRST YEAR**

The issuing and/or completion of an Application Form does not in any way imply the making of an offer of a place.

Application Forms must be accompanied by the two most recent school reports from their current/former school. The Principal may contact this school requesting further relevant information such as attendance, educational progress, disciplinary record and supporting documentation, disabilities, special needs etc., in relation to the applicant.

- Application must be made on the School Transfer Form
- A reference from the Principal or Deputy Principal of the school they are attending will be required
- An interview of both the prospective pupil and his/her parent(s) / guardian(s) with the Principal or Deputy Principal will be part of the application process.
- A place may be offered depending on the availability of places, the compatibility of subjects and levels, the composition of the year group and that the Board is satisfied that to admit such a student is not likely to undermine the characteristic spirit of the school or expose the staff or students of the school to the risk of harm to their health or safety.

## *Appendix I*

### **INFORMATION to be SUPPLIED by the SCHOOL to PARENTS of PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS**

- The school's Admissions Policy
- The school's Code of Behaviour
- The school curriculum and organisation

#### General information about the School:

- the school's name, address, telephone numbers etc; the name of the Patron of the school
- the character and religious ethos of the school, whether the school caters for both sexes
- the complement of teaching staff
- that the school is a recognised school under the Education Act, 1998 and as such follows the prescribed curriculum and is dependent on the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the DES and accordingly school policy must necessarily have regard to such resources and funding available to the school
- the range of subjects taught in the school, including any special programmes of sex education, special classes and whether there are any additional classes or support programmes or support teachers or remedial teachers for students with a disability or other special educational needs
- that the Board is supportive of the principle of inclusiveness in particular in regard to students with a disability or special educational need, having regard to the financial and personnel resources provided by the DES to the school,
- whether the school operates a Transition Year, whether the school has a Student Council, the school's dress code, any other germane information which the school wishes to include e.g. opening hours, closing hours, orchestra, sports, traditions etc.