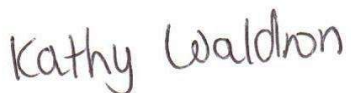




Admission Policy of St Raphael's Special School

Clane Road, Celbridge, Co Kildare
Roll number: 18988G
School Patron: Dublin Diocese

Policy Identification	
Policy Title:	Enrolment and Participation Policy
Owner:	St Raphael's Special School
Next Review Date:	March 2028
Date of approval for this version:	16 th March 2026
Signatures  Chairperson, St Raphael's Special School  Principal, St Raphael's Special School	  Date: 16th March 2026

St Raphael's Special School, Celbridge, County Kildare, W23 F2P5
Registered Charity No. 20140298
Tel: 01 912 1250
Email: info@straphaelsschool.ie
Website: <https://www.straphaelsschool.ie/>



1. Introduction

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

The policy was approved by the school patron on 12th March 2026. 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 Raphael's Special 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.

Applications for Admissions will be accepted through Aladdin. The online application form for admission will be published on the school's website with the Annual Admissions Notice. The school will accept applications for admission during the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

2. Characteristic Spirit and General Objectives of the School

St Raphael's Special School is a Catholic co-educational special school under the Patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin and the trusteeship of the St John of God Hospitaller Services Group. As a Catholic school, the school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils' cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aptitude and ability.

Consistent with the philosophy of the Hospitaller Order of St John of God, and the catholic faith the school actively seeks to promote an ethos which is welcoming, caring, safe, understanding and supportive and which acknowledges the inherent dignity and value of each human being.

St Raphael's Special School provides a religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines; practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St Raphael's Special School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

While the Catholic ethos and education permeates the school day, children of other faith or none are welcomed to the school.



The school tries to provide an environment that enables each child to live, learn and grow to his/her utmost potential. We want our pupils to be able to participate as fully as possible within their local communities and society in general. The school gives each pupil opportunities to develop attitudes and skills that will enable him or her to experience a 'quality of life' as close as possible to that which is available to those in society at large. The term "quality of life" embraces personal choice, relationships, personal development, integration and participation in community life.

3. Admission Statement

St Raphael's Special School will not discriminate in its admission of a pupil to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the pupil or the applicant in respect of the pupil 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 Raphael's Special School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education, provides an education exclusively for pupils with a category or categories of special educational needs (moderate, severe or profound intellectual disability) as specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a pupil who does not have the category of needs specified.

St Raphael's Special 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 Raphael's Special 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

St Raphael's School is designated by the Department of Education as a school which caters for pupils aged 5-18 years of age who function in the moderate, severe or profound range of intellectual disability. In addition to their primary intellectual disability, St Raphael's Special School also caters for pupils presenting with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Behaviours that challenge, physical disability and health needs.

Our classes are structured to meet the needs of our pupils; currently we have.

3 "*Cherry Blossom*" Classes for pupils with a Sev/Profound ID

3 "*Copper Beech*" Classes for pupils with a Moderate ID

10 "*Evergreen*" Classes for pupils with a dual diagnosis of ASD (autism spectrum disorder) and a level of ID within the Mod/Sev level of ID

These Classes are sub divided by age

Junior Classes; for pupils age 5-8 years (inclusive)

Middle Classes for pupils age 9-12 years (inclusive)

Senior Classes for pupils age 13-18 years (inclusive)

The vacancies in any given class will be outlined in our annual admissions notice

St Raphael's Special School follows the Primary school Curriculum (adapted). The school provides pupils with the opportunity to access/complete the Junior Cycle Level 1 curriculum.

Classes are of mixed gender with 6 or 8 pupils. Each pupil has an Individual Education Plan which is drawn up at the beginning of the school year in consultation with parents/guardians.

Referrals are made to clinical team members by the school consultation with parents/guardians as required. Each pupil also has a safeguarding plan/positive behaviour management strategy which is drawn up by school staff in consultation with parents/guardians and signed by same.

5. Admission of Pupils

In the first instance the parent/guardian must notify the NCSE that their child requires a special class or special school. This must be done by the 1ST Oct of the year prior to the year for which admission is sought.

Parents/guardians must notify the NCSE via the parents notify system which is outlined on the NCSE website at <https://ncse.ie/notify-ncse-special-class-special-school>

Parents will then be provided with a letter of eligibility from the NCSE which must accompany their application for admission. The letter of eligibility must state the need for a special school (NOT Special class). The letter of eligibility must be relevant to the year for which the application for admission is being made. If the letter of eligibility is not received within the timeframe for receipt of applications as set out in our Annual Admissions Notice it will be treated as a late application.

This school shall admit each pupil seeking admission except where

- (a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)



- (b) a parent of a pupil, 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 pupil

St Raphael's Special School provides an education exclusively for moderate, severe or profound range of intellectual disability. In addition to their primary intellectual disability, St Raphael's Special School also caters for pupils presenting with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Behaviours that challenge, physical disability and health needs. The school may refuse admission to a pupil, where the pupil does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this 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 admission notice.

7. Referral Procedure

- (a) Referrals are accepted from parents/guardians, or from school principals, playgroup leaders, psychologists, Department of Education, Health Services Executive (HSE) and other assessment agencies with parental consent.
- (b) Parents and professionals wishing to enrol a child in the school must first acquire a letter of eligibility from the NCSE (as outlined in section 5 above)
- (c) Parents and professionals wishing to enrol a child in the school should complete an application online and forward the letter of eligibility from the NCSE, a recent psychological report and a recent utility bill with proof of address, to the school, by post to St Raphael's Special School, Celbridge, Co Kildare or by email to info@straphaelsschool.ie
- (d) The following reports may also be required:
- Previous school/pre-school report
 - Speech and language therapy assessment
 - Physiotherapy report
 - Occupational therapy report
 - Social Work report
 - Psychiatric assessment
 - Any other relevant report



8. Criteria for Acceptance

All applications will be evaluated under the following criteria

- (a) A letter of eligibility from the NCSE has been provided which states the need for a Special School (not Special Class)
- (b) Completed applications have been received by the closing date.
- (c) The applicant meets the profile of moderate, severe or profound range of intellectual disability.
- (d) There is an available place in the school which is age appropriate and meets the applicant's educational, care and medical needs.
- (e) The parents/guardians willingness to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her.

9. Selection Procedure

The School Board of Management delegates the Admission and Enrolment process to the school Enrolment and Discharge Team. The team is comprised of the Chairperson of the School Board of Management, the School Principal and the Deputy Principal. After the closing date outlined in the annual admissions notice the team will review the referral reports to assess needs and to determine whether the school has a suitable placement for the prospective pupil. The School Principal, on behalf of the Enrolment and Discharge Team advises the Board of Management on matters relating to the enrolment of pupils in the school within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

Referrals are formally acknowledged by the school automatically through Aladdin.

School staff may visit the pupil's current pre-school/school placement.

The School Principal and where appropriate relevant members of the school staff will meet with the prospective pupils and parents/guardians.

The School Principal may consult with and seek the advice of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) and the School Inspector.

In the event that the school is oversubscribed priority will be given to pupils based on

- (a) Siblings of children already attending the school
- (b) Distance of school from the child's primary residence, starting with the pupil whose residence is the shortest travelling distance from the school. Google Maps will be used for the calculation of distance.

10. 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 pupil on a waiting list for admission to the school



- (a) A pupil's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí, other than in relation to a pupil's prior attendance at
 - (i) an early intervention class, or
 - (ii) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time.
- (b) The payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school.
- (c) A pupil's academic ability, skills or aptitude; (other than in relation to criteria set out in section 5).
- (d) The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a pupil's parents.
- (e) A requirement that a pupil, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission.
- (f) A pupil's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school (other than, siblings of a pupil attending or having attended the school).
- (g) The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.

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

Should your child or young person be placed on a waiting list for a place, their personal data may be shared with the National Council for Special Education for the purposes of planning for the provision of Special Education placements.

11. Decisions on Applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St Raphael's Special School will be based on the following

- (a) Our school's admission policy
- (b) The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- (c) Receipt of letter of eligibility
- (d) 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 18](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period.

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.

12. 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 pupil 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 pupil's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the pupil'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 21](#) below for further details).

13. Acceptance of an Offer of a Place by an Applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St Raphael's Special School you must indicate

- (a) 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.
- (b) Whether or not you have applied for and are 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.

14. 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 Raphael's Special School where

- (a) It is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (b) 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.
- (c) The parent of a pupil, 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 pupil; or
- (d) An applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 13](#) above.

15. 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 pupils.

16. 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 pupils whose applications for admission to St Raphael's Special 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 Raphael's Special School is in the order of priority assigned to the pupils' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in



accordance with this admission policy.

Should your child be placed on the waiting list for a place, their personal data may be shared to the NCSE for the purposes of planning for the provision of special education placements

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 pupils on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the pupils have been placed on the list.

17. 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.

18. Procedures for Admission of Pupils during the School Year

St Raphael's Special School accepts applications as stated in the referral procedure in Section 1, of pupils of all age groups as outlined in the school's Admission Policy. All applications must be submitted within the timeframe for receipt of applications as set out in the school's Annual Admissions Notice.

Offers of places that become available after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought will be made to those pupils on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which pupils have been placed on the list.

19. Declaration in Relation to the Non-Charging of Fees

The Board of St Raphael's Special 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 pupil to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a pupil in the school

20. Arrangements Regarding Pupils Not Attending Religious Instruction

The following are the School's arrangements for pupils, where the parents/guardians or in the case of a pupil who has reached the age of 18 years, the pupil, have requested that the pupil attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such pupils.

Where the request is made in writing, the pupils will be excused from attendance at formal religious instruction classes and specifically Catholic liturgies. As far as possible, in consultation with parents, suitable alternative arrangements will be made in order to facilitate this. It will not be possible however, to provide religious instruction in other faiths.



21. Reviews/Appeals

Review of Decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the pupil, or in the case of a pupil who has reached the age of 18 years, the pupil, 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.

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 pupil, or in the case of a pupil who has reached the age of 18 years, the pupil may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

Section 29 appeals can be submitted online on the Department of Education website <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie>

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.

Oversubscription

If the refusal to enrol is due to the school being oversubscribed, you may appeal this decision under section 29(1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998, as amended. In the first instance you must request a review by the board of management of the decision to refuse admission. This must be requested within 21 calendar days from the date of the decision to refuse admission to the school. A board of management request form (BOMR1) is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8248c-appeals-in-relation-to-refusal-to-admit-a-student-due-to-a-school-being-oversubscribed/#how-to-seek-a-review-by-the-board-of-management>. You can proceed to submit a section 29 appeal once you have received the outcome of the review by the board of management or once 42 calendar days have passed



since the decision to refuse admission was made (whichever of these is the earliest). A section 29 appeal form can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8248c-appeals-in-relation-to-refusal-to-admit-a-student-due-to-a-school-being-oversubscribed/#how-to-appeal-if-a-child-has-been-refused-admission-because-the-school-is-full>. Alternatively you can submit your appeal online and upload the required documentation at <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie/>. A section 29 appeal must be made no later than 63 calendar days from the date of the decision to refuse admission.

Reasons other than oversubscription

If the refusal to enrol is for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, you may appeal the decision under section 29(1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998, as amended. You may choose to request a review by the board of management of the decision to refuse admission. You are not obliged to, but if you choose to request a review you must request it within 21 calendar days from the date of the decision to refuse admission to the school. A board of management request form (BOMR1) is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8248c-appeals-in-relation-to-refusal-to-admit-a-student-due-to-a-school-being-oversubscribed/#how-to-seek-a-review-by-the-board-of-management>. If you do request a review by the board of management, you can proceed to submit a section 29 appeal once you have received the outcome of the review by the board of management or once 42 calendar days have passed since the decision to refuse admission was made (whichever of these is the earliest). A section 29 appeal form can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/31c4f-appeals-in-relation-to-refusal-to-admit-a-student-for-a-reason-other-than-the-school-being-oversubscribed/#how-to-appeal-if-my-child-has-been-refused-admission-and-the-school-has-places-available>. Alternatively you can submit your appeal online and upload the required documentation at <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie/>. A section 29 appeal must be made no later than 63 calendar days from the date of the decision to refuse admission.

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.

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.