

St Felim's National School

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Roll No. 18564W
Charity No: 20109967
Principal: Mrs. Eilís Keegan
Deputy Principal: Mrs. Patrice Clarke

Leiter, Bailieborough, Co. Cavan.

Admission Policy

Admission Policy of St. Felim's National School

School Address: Leiter, Bailieborough, Co. Cavan A82 CX30

Roll number: 18564W

School Patron: Bishop of Kilmore

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 05/01/2022. 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. Felim's N.S. admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned. The application form for admission can be downloaded from the school's website www.thevalens.com and sent into the school. It is also available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it from the school office. The application form can also be accessed via a link on our website, the details will automatically go to the school using this link.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Felim's N.S. (The Vale) is a Roman Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore and is situated in the townland of Leiter, about two miles outside the town of Bailieborough in Co. Cavan.

St Felim's N.S. is managed by a Board of Management, appointed under the terms of the Education Act (1998) and the Rules for Primary Schools and benefits from the support of an active Parent's Association. At present,

we have 195 children enrolled in our school and a staff that consists of an administrative Principal, eight mainstream teachers, two full-time and one part-time special education teachers and three SNAs.

'Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive. Therefore, Catholic schools may include children who adhere to other religions or other stances for living. While mindful of their duty to educate in the distinctive beliefs, values, and practices of the Catholic community, teachers will bear witness to an attitude of respect for and appreciation of all'. *'The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum p15'*

'Catholic Ethos' in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects;
- a living relationship with God and with other people;
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,
- a school which provides 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. Felim's N.S. 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 School Ethos:

St. Felim's N.S. recognises the central role of the family as the primary educator of the child. We also accept and support the constitutional right and duty of the parents to provide for the religious, moral, intellectual, physical and social education of children.

Our school aims to provide the best possible environment to cater for the cultural, educational, moral, physical, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions of all its students with the resources available to us. The focus of our school's philosophy is the education of the whole child to reach his/her full potential. We show special concern for the disadvantaged, respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each person. We cater for young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and have been quick to respond to the emerging needs of students and communities.

We uphold the values and principles of a Christian education in the Catholic tradition. Working together as a school community, the Board of Management, Principal, staff, parents and pupils will strive to provide an environment, which will allow all students to develop to their maximum potential and fulfil their role in society.

Finally, and equally as important as academic success, is the attitude of the children. We hope that when they leave St. Felim's N.S. they would:

- Have concern and respect for the welfare of others and for the rules which govern the community.
- Enjoy learning and be prepared to tackle further education.

- Be confident in their abilities.
- Be proud of their school and be a credit to their families.

Our Aims:

The school community of St. Felim's N.S. aspires to promote a nurturing inclusive environment where each child is encouraged and motivated to become a responsible and happy individual.

We aim to create a school where each child achieves his/her full potential as a well-rounded responsible member of society through encouragement and example; where teaching the child includes the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and social aspects of human development; and where a love of learning and an appreciation of life and the world are engrained.

The school aims in particular to:

- Respect the dignity of the student with his/her background, tradition and beliefs, valuing the potential of each and encouraging the strong to support the weak.
- Enable the student to develop a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others.
- Encourage in the student a sense of creativity and of collaboration with others.
- Promote the student's appreciation of his/her cultural heritage.
- Prepare the student through academic training for his/her vocational role in life.
- Provide opportunities for the student to experience God in the wonder of creation, in worship and in service of others.
- Provide a disciplined atmosphere in which the student is encouraged to grow in freedom and to take increasing responsibility for his/her own education and for the life of the school community

Our Mission Statement

St. Felim's N.S. is a co-educational Roman Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore. Its aim is to promote the full and harmonious development of our pupils: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with others. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

St. Felim's N.S. provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith.

3. Admission Statement

St. Felim's N.S. will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or

- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

St Felim's N.S. 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 Felim's NS 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.

All denominational schools

St. Felim's N.S. 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 Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (admission to Schools) Act 2018.

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

St. Felim's N.S. is a mainstream school. It does not have a Special Class or ASD Class. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are catered for by their mainstream class teacher with the support of the Special Education Team.

5. Admission of Students

Application Procedures

1. The application process usually takes place in January annually. The exact closing date will be published in our Admission Notice each year. This notice will be published on the school's website at least one week prior to the school commencing our annual admission process. The notice will also be displayed on the parent's noticeboard inside the front door of the school and forwarded to local playschools. A message stating that we are commencing the admissions process will also be placed in the parish bulletin.
2. Junior Infants must be 4 years of age by September 1st in the year of entry. ***(However, the Board of Management strongly recommends that applicant children are at least four years of age on or before April 1st of the school commencement year)***
3. Parents wishing for their children to attend this school should complete the '**Application for Admission**' form, using the link provided on our school website www.thevalens.com. Parents will be reminded to read the admissions policy and other relevant policies on the school website. A hard copy of policies will also be available on request or may be viewed in the main school office.
4. Where both parents have joint-guardianship – as is the automatic case of married parents, or where an unmarried father has applied for & been granted joint-guardianship or where unmarried fathers/parents satisfy the legal requirements for guardianship under family law, both signatures are

required on the 'Application for Admission' form. In the case of a single guardian, this signature alone is required.

5. The application process is initiated once the school has received either a hard copy or an online 'Application for Admission' form and a copy of the child's birth certificate. The form will be date stamped on receipt by the school and is attached as **Appendix 1** of this policy.
6. By completing an 'Application for Admission' form the date of application, the child's date of birth, address and telephone contact numbers are recorded on the school's database (Aladdin Schools). This record of the application merely confirms that the application will be assessed under the criteria outlined below and does not confer any further status on that application.

Please note:

- Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage
- Telephone calls or personal school visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.

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

All denominational schools

St. Felim's N.S. is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (admission to Schools) Act 2018.

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:

Priority	Criterion
1	Siblings of children currently attending St Felim's N.S. <u>or</u> siblings of those who have attended the school in the past. (including step-siblings or half siblings resident at the same address)
2	Children living within the school catchment area (including the catchment area of the former Drumanespic school.)
3	Children living in the Bailieborough area of the Killann Parish, starting closest to the school and radiating outwards from the school within the Parish.
4	Children/Step-children/Foster- children of current permanent teaching staff and ancillary staff.
5	Children of parents/grandparents who are past pupils of the school. (The school will only apply this criterion to a maximum of 25% of available places as set out in our Annual Admission Notice.)

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

Priority	Criterion
1	If the applications within the criteria 1 exceed the number of places available, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant.
2	Children living in the school catchment area (including the catchment area of the former Drumanespic school.) If the applications within the criteria exceed the number of places available, then the furthest from the school will be eliminated first.
3	Children living in the Bailieborough area of the Killann Parish starting closest to the school and radiating outwards from the school within the Parish. If the applications within the criteria exceed the number of places available, then the furthest from the school will be eliminated first.
4	Children of current permanent teaching staff and ancillary staff. If the applications within the criteria exceed the number of places available, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, with priority being given to the oldest student.
5	Children of parents/grandparents who are past pupils of the school. If the applications within the criteria exceed the number of places available, then the furthest from the school will be eliminated first.

Please Note: If, in the event that one place is available and the next two children are twins; both will be taken. In the event that two children share the same date of birth when applying the criteria above, the BOM will draw lots to determine who will be offered the place.

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:

- 1) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí
- 2) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school
- 3) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- 4) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- 5) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- 6) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than, Criterion 1 and 5 as outlined above. In relation to Criterion (5) parents and grandparents having attended, the school will only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in our school's annual admission notice.

7) 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. However, late applications will affect admission if the school is over subscribed.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Felim's N.S. will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications.

Please see Section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and Section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see Section 18 below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St Felim's N.S. you must indicate

- i. whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and
- ii. whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St Felim's N.S. where:

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is

- acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in Section 10 above.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students. Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom:

- an application for admission to the school has been received,
- an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St. Felim's N.S. 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. Felim's N.S. is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy. Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

(a.) The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, to classes other than the school's intake group are as follows:

- Parents/Guardians complete an application form.
- Application will be assessed by the BOM using the criteria in Section 6 of this admissions policy.
- Such applications will be dealt on a case-by-case basis but will normally be only considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area. The Board may also take into consideration information provided concerning attendance and the child's educational progress.
- Admission will depend on space in the required class. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the BoM reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:
 - *size of /available space in classrooms,*
 - *educational needs of children of a particular age*
 - *multi-grade classes*
 - *presence of children with special educational/ behavioural needs*
 - *DES maximum class average directives (as determined by the inspectorate)*

(b.) The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students, who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

- The procedures of the school in this instance are the same as is outlined above.
- Pupils from other schools may transfer into the school at any time, if they move to a permanent address in the school's catchment area.
- However, St. Felim' N.S. will recommend to applicants seeking places after September 30th of each year and whose children are attending schools in the locality, that where possible, they retain their children in their current schools until the end of the instructional term (i.e. the end of October, December or after Easter).
- The Education Welfare Act (2000) contains some specific provisions in relation to the transfer of pupils including that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress should be communicated between schools. Before enrolment, the school will require parental consent to contact the previous School Principal, for information on the child's attendance, academic progress and behaviour.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Felim's N.S. 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

Our school has a Roman Catholic ethos and in keeping with that ethos, children of all or no other faith are welcome to apply.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents/guardians 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:

- Parents/Guardians who wish for their child not to engage in religious instruction must make a written request to the principal of the school.
- A meeting will then be arranged with parents/guardians to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.
- Written requests by parents/guardians will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parents/guardians 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.

Review Procedure

The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management every three years, if required by the Patron or if the need arises.

Date to be reviewed: Term 1 2026-2027

Policy Ratification

The Board of Management of St. Felim's N.S. ratified this policy on 29/11/2023

Signed: Gerry Sheeran
Chairperson, Board of Management.

Date: 29/11/23

Signed: Pilís Keegan
Principal.

Date: 29/11/2023

The content of this policy have been approved by Kathy McGoldrick acting on behalf on the Patron (05/01/2022).

