

Admission Policy of Catherine McAuley NS

School Address: 59 Lower Baggot St., Dublin 2

Roll number: 19705T

School Patron/s: Archbishop of Dublin

Trustees: The Sisters of Mercy

Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Equal Status Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004), Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, and the guidelines laid down by the Department of Education and Skills for enrolment at Catherine McAuley N.S. The chairperson of the board of Management Ms. Elaine Egan and the acting principal Ms. Ciara McCauley will be happy to clarify and further matters arising from the policy.

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 21st November 2025. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

This current review is in response to Circular 39/2025.

The relevant dates and timelines for Catherine McAuley NS 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.

A guideline document with detail about the admissions process is published on the school's website and will be made available in soft or hard copy on request to any person who requests it.

The Board of Management consults with and keeps the Patron informed of decisions and proposals of the Board.

1. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Catherine McAuley NS is a Catholic co-educational special reading school that offers a two-year placement for children with a severe presentation of Dyslexia, with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. There are ninety-nine places in total.

“Catholic Ethos” in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church. Catherine McAuley NS aims to promote and uphold the character and the 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.

The school occupies premises provided by the Sisters of Mercy and is under their trusteeship. The adjacent convent was one of the first educational establishments in the country, founded by Catherine McAuley in 1842. We are proud to bear her name and continue the educational tradition, which she regarded as one of the first works of Mercy.

The Department of Education and Youth established the present school in 1980. The Department of Education and Youth funds the school. It caters for the children of average or above average ability with a severe presentation of Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD) specific to reading. The characteristic spirit of Catherine McAuley NS also directly reflects Article 2a of The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), namely

“A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act.”

Students who meet the enrolment criteria experience the most severe presentation of Dyslexia/SLD, and have had access to intervention in their mainstream school at the school support and school support plus levels of the Continuum of Support. The pervasive nature of severe Dyslexia/SLD that has been resistant to SET in mainstream requires intervention that is intensive and disparate, hence the recommendation for placement in a specialist reading school from a diagnosing psychologist.

We welcome children of all faiths and none.

2. Admission Statement

Catherine McAuley NS 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.

All denominational schools

Catherine McAuley NS 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 of the Catholic faith, and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Catherine McAuley NS is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with severe Dyslexia as set out in the DES enrolment criteria for Reading Schools.

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

Catherine McAuley NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Youth, provides an education exclusively for students with a severe presentation of Dyslexia. The Board of Management discharges its duty under the Education Act (1988) section 15 to make decisions on individual admissions applications in strict adherence with the published admissions policy of the school. The processing of enrolment and transport for reading schools is overseen by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit students seeking admission who meet the criteria 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 during the entire duration of the placement in the school.

Catherine McAuley NS is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Catherine McAuley NS provides an education exclusively for students with severe Dyslexia as outlined in DES agreed enrolment criteria for Reading Schools, and will refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

DES Agreed Enrolment Criteria for Reading Schools

- Assessment by a psychologist on a standardised test of intelligence should place general intellectual ability within the average range or above.
- Application to the School principal should be accompanied by a psychological report (not more than two years old).
- Obvious discrepancy between general intellectual ability and performance on a standardised test of reading ability.
- Discrepancy between verbal and non-verbal abilities, one of either the verbal or performance scores should be within the average range and the combined scores should indicate ability within the average range.
- Performance in basic literacy skills as measured by a standardised test should be at a very low level compared to the vast majority of children in a similar age cohort.
- The pupil should have completed second class in primary school or be at least eight years old and not more than twelve on enrolment.
- Consideration should also be given to the child's speaking, writing, spelling & comprehension skills as well as to his/her social and personal development.
- Evidence of Specific Learning Disability, as defined by the Department of Education & Science, as the primary disability of the child.
- Placement in a reading school should be one of the options recommended by the psychologist.
- In September/October, the principal will report to the Board of Management of Catherine McAuley N.S., St Oliver Plunkett N.S or St Roses N.S. that procedures for enrolment were followed.

Enrolment criteria & procedures in accordance with the provision of the Education Act 1998 and the guidelines laid down by the Department of Education & Science

Enrolment Procedures

This Admission Policy has been reviewed with reference to Circular 0039/2025, *“Approach and key measures to support the Forward Planning for Special Education Provision for the 2026/2027 school year and beyond.”*

The Board of Management notes that Circular 0039/2025 is an administrative instrument issued by the Department of Education and Youth to support forward planning for *new* special classes and special schools. It does not constitute an amendment to the Education Act 1998 or the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, nor does it have retrospective effect on admissions processes already governed by a duly-published admission policy and annual admission notice under Section 62A–62T of the Education Act 1998 (as amended).

In accordance with Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998, the Board of Management is required to manage the school “in accordance with its policies, the directions of the Minister, and such regulations as may be made,” but nothing in that section authorises the Minister to alter by circular the statutory obligations of the Board under the Act itself.

Accordingly, the Board confirms that:

- The Education Act 1998 and its amendments remain the primary legal authority governing admissions;
- The Board will implement the provisions of Circular 0039/2025 prospectively, where consistent with the Acts and with any subsequently approved policy revision; and

- For the current admissions cycle, governed by the Annual Admissions Notice published on March 2025, the requirement for an NCSE Letter of Eligibility shall not apply, as Circular 0039/2025's forward-planning provisions do not extend to this school's existing designation or to an admissions process already commenced under statute.

This position ensures compliance with Sections 62A–62T of the Education Act 1998 (as amended) and upholds the principles of fair procedure, legal certainty, and legitimate expectation for applicants who rely on the school's published policy and timelines.

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in Catherine McAuley NS for children with severe dyslexia/Specific Learning Disability (SLD) when the following is provided in support of such an application;

Professional reports outlining:

- Diagnosis of severe dyslexia/SLD in line with the parameters and scores as outlined below in this policy
- AND
- A demonstration of the understanding of the severity of the child's dyslexia/SLD as evidenced in the professional report(s)
- AND
- Given the severity of the child's dyslexia/SLD and the impact on their ability to access the curriculum a clear professional recommendation to attend a reading school

Receipt of applications by the principal will be acknowledged in writing.

If the child does not meet criteria of enrolment a letter is sent informing the applicant that the child is not eligible for enrolment.

Applications may not meet the criteria necessary for enrolment due to:

- The psychological report does not place the child within the average range of ability.
- As evidenced in the psychological assessment the SLD/Dyslexia is not the primary difficulty of the child.
- The child's performance in basic literacy skills as measured by a standardised test is above the level accepted for enrolment.
- Children should be eight years old and not more than twelve on the first day of the school year.

These are the enrolment criteria and procedures in accordance with the provision of the Education Act (1998) and its amendments, and the guidelines laid down by the Department of Education and Youth for enrolment at Catherine McAuley NS, St. Rose's NS and St. Oliver Plunkett NS.

Parents are informed that they may request a review of the decision regarding refusal to enrol by the Board of Management by completing the 'Review of Board of Management Request form' available at www.gov.ie and sending to the Board within 21 calendar days of the date of a refusal letter.

Upon receiving a review request within 21 calendar days of the refusal letter, the Board of Management must notify parents/guardians of the outcome within 42 days from the date of the refusal letter. Further information about the appeals process is available at <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie/>

Enrolment is temporary, whole time for a maximum of two years (in consultation with parents) after which the child returns to mainstream education. Consistent attendance is supported and expected to maximise benefit from the placement.

Catherine McAuley N.S. has a Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy, which have been drawn up by the staff and the Board of Management. The rules and structures have been drawn up for a good purpose and are explained to pupils and parents. Pupils are expected to behave as they are asked and obey the rules as they apply to them. Parents are expected to adhere to these policies for the duration of placement in Catherine McAuley NS.

In the event of a place being offered to an applicant, their current school principal will be asked to furnish a pro-forma report on the child's progress at school and an undertaking that the child can be enrolled in the school at any time.

Account will be taken of each pupil's age and the severity of their Dyslexia in the selection process, as well as Dyslexia being their primary difficulty.

Should Dyslexia not be the primary difficulty of a student, and this impacts on the school's capacity to deliver an intensive dyslexic intervention to the class with equity: the Principal and Chairperson may need to discuss an alternative school placement with parents.

A list will be prepared of eligible children up to and including those on the 5th Percentile for Word Reading, and places will be offered in ascending order.

The decision of the Board of Management on each application will be made on the basis of the application information. Subsequent to the filling of available places in a given school year by the Board of Management in strict adherence to the admissions policy, applications are sent to the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) appointed to Catherine McAuley NS for processing.

Parents or Guardians will be required to provide certain information when their child is being enrolled. Such information may include:

- Name/s of parents or guardians;
- Contact telephone numbers;
- Details of any medical conditions which school should be aware of;
- Religion;
- Previous schools attended;
- Any other relevant information (including and such other information as may be prescribed under the Welfare Act, 2000)
- PPS number
- Eircode

Certain information will be uploaded on Primary Online Database (POD) as required by the Department of Education and Youth.

The school may request additional reports to facilitate applications for necessary resourcing (SNA applications, specialised furniture, grants etc.).

5. 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:

Selection criteria:

From the pool of applicants that meet the agreed DES criteria for Reading Schools, A list will be prepared of eligible children up to and including those on the 5th Percentile for Word Reading, and places will be offered in ascending order.

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:

In the event of oversubscription on any of the percentile ranks, the children will be prioritised by age, with the older children being offered places first.

6. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7) (e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than to ascertain whether or not the student has severe Dyslexia and meets the agreed enrolment criteria for Reading Schools.
- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- (f) 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.

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Catherine McAuley NS will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- The information provided by the applicant and received during the period specified in our annual admissions 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.

8. 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).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Catherine McAuley NS, you must indicate

(i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another reading 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 reading school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other reading school or schools concerned.

10. 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 Catherine McAuley NS where—

- it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- 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.
- 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
- an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.

11. 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—

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (iv) 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).

12. 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 Catherine McAuley NS 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 Catherine McAuley NS is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications in class levels (waiting list for 2nd class, 3rd class, 4th class, 5th class and 6th class) after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will not be considered – save in the event that there is no oversubscription, and those applications meet the agreed enrolment criteria.

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 class level where a vacant place arises and order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

13. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will not be considered for enrolment for that given year.

Late applicants will be notified that the closing date has passed – and that it will not be possible to process their application, but that their application may be considered in the event that

places are not filled. This would only happen if the waiting list had been completely exhausted, their application met agreed enrolment criteria and would require Board approval.

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

As Catherine McAuley NS is a special school where on average 50% of the school population transitions out and a new 50% transitions in on an annual basis – intake is at all class levels for the purpose of admission, and the parameters of this policy.

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 waiting list will be constituted of eligible students in the order of priority assigned by ascending percentile scores in word reading, with older children at each percentile rank being offered places first. An offer made after the commencement of the school year is on the proviso that accepting an enrolment mid-year is year one of a two-year placement.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Catherine McAuley NS or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions 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.

Note: Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

15. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

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

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. It is important to note that additional supervision cannot be provided for any child – and Catherine McAuley NS will endeavour to work with parents should we need to forge a solution.

16. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

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

Parents are informed that they may request a review of the decision regarding refusal to enrol by the Board of Management by completing the 'Review of Board of Management Request form' available at www.gov.ie and sending to the Board within 21 calendar days of the date of a refusal letter.

Upon receiving a review request within 21 calendar days of the refusal letter, the Board of Management must notify parents/guardians of the outcome within 42 days from the date of the refusal letter. Further information about the appeals process is available at <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie/>

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, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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 Youth.

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 Youth.

Catherine McAuley National School

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 20th of October 2025, approved by the Patron Body on **21st November 2025** and communicated to the parent body/published on

Signed Elaine Egan Date 20/10/25.

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed Gara McCauley Date 20/10/25

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management