**Merlin Woods Primary School**

 **Enrolment Policy**

General Introduction

Merlin Woods Primary School is a co-educational Roman Catholic primary school, under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Galway. We opened our doors for the first time in September 2010, catering for the children of the Good Shepherd Parish, in the Doughiska, Roscam and Ardaun communities. We have children from Junior Infants to 6th class and we have two special classes for children with Autism. We are a happy, welcoming, child-centred, progressive school which aspires to meet the educational/social needs of the young children in its care. As with all Roman Catholic schools, we provide Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and we promote the formation of the pupils in the Roman Catholic Faith.

The enrolment policy of Merlin Woods Primary School supports the principles of:

* *inclusiveness*, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need;
* *equality* of access and *participation* in the school;
* *parental choice* in relation to enrolment and
* *respect* for the diversity of *values, beliefs, traditions, languages* and *ways of life* in society.

Therefore, no child will be refused access to Merlin Woods Primary School for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, accent, language, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status, religious or political beliefs or values, family or social circumstances.

Policy Aims

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school;

* to make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner, consistent with the ethos, the mission statement of the school and legislative requirements
* to make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of resources available to it
* to put in place a framework which will ensure an effective and productive relationship between children, parents and teachers.

Application Procedures

*Stage 1: Expression of Interest*

Parents who wish to enrol pupils in the Merlin Woods Primary School for September are required to have filled out and submitted an initial Expression of Interest form by 31 January in the year they wish to enrol. This form is available from the school and on the download section of our school website, www.merlinwoods.com. Expression of Interest forms will only be accepted during the months September to January in the year immediately prior to enrolment, ie we do not take applications several years in advance, only in the year prior to enrolment.

*Stage 2: Letter of Offer*

Places will be allocated in accordance to the Decision Making process and criteria outlined on Page 3 of this policy. Parents who have been allocated a place will receive a formal offer of a place and an Enrolment Form. Applicants must accept this offer in writing by returning the completed Enrolment Form, along with proof of address (a utility bill issued within the previous three months), the child’s original Birth/Adoption Certificate by the date specified on the enrolment offer.

Pupils will, as a rule, only be enrolled to classes during the month of September. Children may be admitted to a class during the school year provided they show proof of being newly resident in the area in the previous three months and subject to school policy, availability and space.

*Stage 3: Waiting List*

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list. Should places become available through non-acceptance or cancellation of a place, places will be offered in accordance with the criteria set out below.

Decision Making Process

As a general principle and in so far as practicable, children will be enrolled on application **provided that there is space available**. This school caters for two junior infant class intakes each year, as we are in a purpose-built 16-mainstream classroom school, as provided by the Department of Education and Skills. There will be a maximum average of 28 children in each class and we will be working towards the DES staffing average of 27 children per class. In the event that applications exceed or are expected to exceed the number of spaces available due to class size, or available space in classrooms, the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School has determined that priority in the allocation of places will be given to the following groups of children and the criteria of the age of pupils will be taken into account with priority given to older children. For new Junior Infant applicants, places will first be offered to children who have reached their **4th birthday on or before by 1st March** prior to the September they wish to enrol.

*Criteria to be used in the decision making process:*

* *Siblings of pupils already in the school, in order of age, oldest first.*
* *Children of staff members, in order of age, oldest first.*
* *Children residing in Doughiska, Roscam, Ardaun.* (a recent utility bill within 3 previous months or other such proof of address will be required), *in order of age, oldest first.*
* *Children who are not currently residing in Doughiska, Roscam*, *Ardaun* (a recent utility bill within 3 previous months or other such proof of address will be requested), *in order of age, oldest first.*

In determining enrolment the Board of Management shall take into account Department of Education and Skills regulations regarding staffing provisions, maximum class size and maximum class average and any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation such as physical space, the educational needs and rights of children already enrolled, multi-grade classes and the presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs.

The Board of Management shall at all times have regard for the Health, Safety and Welfare of pupils and teachers and others who work in the school, and all decisions made by the Board will give paramount importance to this obligation on the Board.

We wish to inform all parents and guardians that this enrolment policy has been drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act for Persons with special Needs 2004. In this policy the term parent includes Guardians, Adoptive and Foster Parents and any adult officially deemed to be in loco parentis.

Provision of Key Information by Parents

Certain information is required when children are being enrolled. A specific enrolment form is provided by the Board of Management for this purpose. Applications will only be accepted on the basis of a fully completed and accurate Enrolment Form. This form must be accompanied by the original Birth/Adoption Certificate. This will be photocopied and the original will be returned in due course.

An incomplete/inaccurate Enrolment Form constitutes an invalid Enrolment Application.

**Pupils Transferring**

Children transferring from another school who are newly resident in the area within the previous three months, may be admitted to a Class during the school year, subject to school policy and space, in line with the criteria above, and fitting the age profile of the class. Children already resident in and attending school in Galway, who wish to transfer to Merlin Woods Primary School, may only enrol in September, and if places are available. It is a requirement of the Board of Management that information concerning attendance and the child’s educational progress be communicated between schools. (Section 28, Education Welfare Act 2000).

Enrolment of Children with Special Needs

In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs the Board of Management will require a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological reports or where such a report is not available to request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required following receipt of the report. The Board of Management will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Board of Management deems that further resources are required it will, prior to enrolment, request the Department of Education and Skills to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include, for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, resource teacher for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other.

As previously stated, all available information must be provided on the relevant sections of the Enrolment Form. An incomplete/inaccurate Enrolment Form constitutes an invalid Enrolment Application.

# Appeals

Parents who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. It must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education and Skills on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol. Details on appealing decisions on enrolment under section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007), are available on the Department’s website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) (Circular 22/02 - Processing of an Appeal).

All appeals and decisions of school management will be dealt with in an equitable manner, and in accordance with fair procedures.

**Code of Behaviour**

Children enrolled in Merlin Woods Primary School are required to co-operate with and support the School Code of Behaviour as well as all other school policies on curriculum, organisation, & management. The Board of Management places Parents/ Guardians responsible for ensuring that their child co-operates with said policies in an age-appropriate way. In signing the enrolment form you are agreeing to the terms of the school Code of Behaviour and you are undertaking to co-operate with and support the school in implementing this Code of Behaviour, both in its general application and in its application to your child.

**Evaluation**

The BOM will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the policy and review and amend the Policy as required with particular emphasis placed upon

* Effective management of the application process
* Clarity and transparency relating to the process
* Applicants informed in time regarding the status of their application especially in cases of refusal
* Parental feedback

**Monitoring Procedures**

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the BoM at the appropriate time. It will also be referred by the principal for consideration by the full staff. The principal will report to the BOM regularly regarding the process of enrolment. Where the principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated to her by the BoM in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the BOM at the earliest time.

**Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually and may be subject to change by the Board of Management. The updated policy and applicable criteria will be available on the school’s website, [www.merlinwoods.com](http://www.merlinwoods.com).

**Ratification & Communication**

This policy was reviewed by management and staff, and ratified by the Board of Management of Merlin Woods Primary School, in November 2018. It is communicated to parents on our school website, [www.merlinwoods.com](http://www.merlinwoods.com). It is also available for viewing in the school.

**Date for future review**: November 2020

**Signed: Paula O’Connor Principal**

 **Fr Martin Glynn Chairperson, BOM**