

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

## ARDEE COMMUNITY SCHOOL



**School Address: John St, Ardee, Co. Louth.  
Eircode: A92 F838  
Roll number: 91441T**

**School Patrons: Archdioceses of Armagh, Louth/Meath Education and  
Training Board (LMETB)**

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## 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 Ardee Community School has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents/guardians of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patrons on the **26<sup>th</sup> September 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 Ardee Community Schools 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 is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

## 2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

### **Characteristic Spirit of Ardee Community School under the joint patronage of the Archdioceses of Armagh and Louth/Meath ETB**

Ardee School Community School is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Archdioceses of Armagh and Louth/Meath ETB.

1. Community Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Community Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.
2. Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1974 following the amalgamation of St Annes, Convent of Mercy Secondary School, Ardee Vocational School and the De La Salle Secondary School. The values of Louth/Meath ETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Archdioceses of Armagh are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.
3. The core values of Ardee Community School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour

to assist each student to reach his/her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

4. Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, our school (Ardee Community School) provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.
5. Our school (Ardee Community School) provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents/guardians and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.
6. Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.
7. In Ardee Community School, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Ardee Community School 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.

#### **4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the special classes**

*“Ardee Community 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.*

*Ardee Community 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.”*

Ardee Community School is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education, which provide an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

The special classes in Ardee Community School provide an education exclusively for students who fulfil the requirements for an Autism Specific class as follows:

The student must have a report or reports from a relevant professional or a team of professionals stating that:

1. The student has been assessed as having a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. This assessment must be in line with the established Department of Education criteria of DSM IV/V or ICD 10.  
And
2. The student has complex learning needs, “that require the support of a special class at second level”.  
And
3. The complex learning needs arising from the student’s diagnosis are clearly outlined in the professional report.  
(NCSE Special Class Guidelines 2016)

The number of students in these classes is limited to 6 places in each class respectively.

#### **5. Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission into First year except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details)
- b) a parent/guardian 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 positive 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.
- c) where a student is less than 12 years of age in first year on the 1 January of the school year concerned. Students should reach 12 years of age by 1 January in their first year in second-level school.
- d) The Autism Specific classes in Ardee Community School provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autism meeting the conditions in [section 4](#) above. The Board of Management may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class. The decision on the conditions for granting a place in a special class lies with the SENO under the remit of the NCSE. The Board of Management can then offer a place to the student in the Autism Specific Class.

*i. Procedures for Student Entry into First Year each year.*

The process of admission to Ardee Community School will include a number of stages:

Note: Ardee Community School reserves the right to change any of the dates and procedures outlined below in accordance with changing circumstances.

- The Annual Admissions Notice regarding the commencement of the enrolment procedure will be communicated via the school website after September 15<sup>th</sup> each year.

The Application Form Part (1) will be made available, on the school website, from 1st October each year for entry into first year the following August/September.

All aspects of the Application Form Part (1) must be completed fully by the parents/guardians of the student being enrolled. (The information sought therein complies with the regulations of the various Data Protection Acts and will be managed in accordance with these acts.)

Application Form Part (1) will only be accepted in respect of first year entrants, i.e. students starting second-level the following August/September. For transfers into other years please see [section 15](#) below.

Applications for the Autism Specific classes established in Ardee Community School require parents/guardians to tick the box on the Application Form Part (1) stating the request to enrol in the Autism Specific class.

The closing date for completed Application Form Part (1) for entry into First Year will be 4pm on the Friday preceding the October Bank Holiday each year. The exact date will be specified in the Annual Admissions Notice.

The Board of Management reserves the right to limit the number of incoming students each year, if it is deemed necessary. While every effort will be made to cater for all eligible

applicants, the school is dependent on the resources provided to it by the Department of Education and Skills.

## *ii. Special Educational Needs*

Ardee Community School welcomes applications from students with special educational needs (SEN) who meet the above criteria for admission.

Ardee Community School is committed, within its Characteristic Spirit (See [section 2](#) above), to do all that is reasonable to accommodate students with special education needs.

Following acceptance of a place in Ardee Community School the school authorities will meet with the parents/guardians to discuss the student's needs and the school's ability to meet those needs. A copy of the student's educational, medical, or where appropriate, psychological report and other reports (Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language etc) will be requested.

To assist Ardee Community School in meeting needs it is essential that the Board of Management is fully informed of the student's educational history and the resources required to provide an educational service appropriate to the applicant's best interests.

## **6. Oversubscription**

- 1. 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:**

### **Criterion 1:**

All siblings of students who are attending/have attended the school. This includes foster siblings and step siblings.

### **Criterion 2:**

All students whose families reside within the Greater Ardee Area (As defined by the school transport system).

### **Criterion 3:**

Applicants living outside the Greater Ardee area (As defined by the school transport system).

## **2. Oversubscription for the Autism Specific class(es) at Ardee Community School.**

If the number of applicants for the Autism Class exceeds the number of places available (maximum six per class), the school will then apply the following criteria beginning with criterion1 until all places are allocated:

### **Criterion 1:**

All siblings of students who are attending/have attended the school. This includes foster siblings and step siblings.

### **Criterion 2:**



All students whose families reside within the Greater Ardee Area (As defined by the school transport system).

### **Criterion 3:**

Applicants living outside the Greater Ardee area (As defined by the school transport system).

Please note:

In the event of applications in any of the above categories being greater than the number of places available, a lottery will be used to determine the order that these places will be offered.

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:

1. A lottery will be arranged by the Principal to allocate the remaining places.
2. The board of management will determine procedures for the conduct of this lottery.
3. An order of applicants will be then drawn up.
4. Offers based on the order of applicants drawn up in 3 above will be made.  
Applicants for the Autism Specific class must subsequently, meet the conditions for entry into the classes (See [section 4](#) and [section 5\(d\)](#) above).

All completed application forms must be exhausted before late applications will be considered.

## **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:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a Primary school other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at an Autism Specific class.
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to the conditions required for admission to the special Autism classes (See [section 4](#) above) insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned.
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents/guardians.
- (e) a requirement that a student, or their parents/guardians, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission.
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of their family attending or having previously attended the school; other than those students who meet Selection Criterion 1 based on siblings of a student attending or having attended the school.



- (g) the date and time on which an application for Application Part (1) was received by the school.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 and received prior to the publication of the Education (Admissions to Schools Act 2018) on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 only).

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Ardee Community School will be based on the following:

- (i) Our school's admission policy.
- (ii) The school's annual admission notice.
- (iii) The information provided by the applicant in the school's official Application Part (1) form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications.
- (iv) Offers of places will be made within 21 days of the closing date (The Friday immediately prior to the October Bank Holiday) each year.
- (v) If the school is oversubscribed, places will be offered in order of Criteria i.e. Criterion 1, Criterion 2, Criterion 3 (See [section 6](#) above).
- (vi) Anyone applying after 4pm on the Friday immediately prior to the October Bank Holiday weekend will be placed on a waiting list and offered a place only after applicants who satisfy the 3 criteria have been offered places. (See [section 6](#) above).

NB: A copy of the applicant's original birth certificate and any necessary additional information will be required to complete the acceptance process.

(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 Ardee Community School, the reasons why 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**

An Ardee Community School Application Form Part (2) will be sent with the offer of a place. This form must be returned to the office **within 14 days** of the offer being made. A confirmation of receipt will be issued.

## **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 Ardee Community School 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/guardian 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
- (iv) Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student.
- (v) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' (Application Form Part (2)) 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.

## **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 Ardee Community 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 Ardee Community School 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.

A waiting list for admission into the Autism Specific class(es) in the event of oversubscription will be similarly established as in [section 13](#) paragraphs 1,2 and 3.

## **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 Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

## **15.Procedures for admission of students to other years, during the school year, procedures for admission into a curricular programme or subject and application to repeat a year.**

### **A. The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:**

#### **i. Applications for admission of students into mainstream.**

This applies to the admission of students enrolled in another school or new enrolments from other jurisdictions for whom an application is made prior to the commencement of the school year or during the academic year.

#### **ii. Applications for admissions of students into the Autism Specific Class**

This applies to the admission of students into years other than first year, either at the commencement of a school year or during the academic year. Applications will only be considered if there is a place available in the Autism Specific class(es) at the time of application (maximum six places per class) and if the student meets the conditions in **section 4 and section 5(d)** above.

The following apply to both **i** and **ii** above:

1. An Application Form (for entry into other years except for first year) and available on the Ardee Community School website must be filled out by the parents/guardians of all applicants.
2. The Board of Management will consider an application from the parents/guardians of a student who has already moved into the Greater Ardee Area (as defined by the school transport system), subject to all the following:
  - The availability of places in the year group and specific subjects.

- In the case of an application for a place in the Autism Specific class (es), there are only six places per class and the class(es) are deemed full at if the six places in each class have been allocated.
  - The ability of the School to ensure continuity of study of subjects and levels.
  - Adherence to the procedures 1 to 8 for students as listed above (see [Section 15A](#))
3. Where a student is considered for a place, the decision is taken by the Board of Management following consultation by the school authorities with the student's parents/guardians.
  4. An offer of a place will be issued within 21 days of the consultation.
  5. Students must be moving to the next year group if the application is for September or to the same year if applying to move during the school year:
  6. Applicants will be accepted in order of priority of the criteria below:

**Criterion 1:** Applicants who have siblings already enrolled or siblings who previously attended in Ardee Community School.

**Criterion2:** Applicants living in the Greater Ardee Area (As defined by the school transport system).

**Criterion 3:** Applicants living outside the Greater Ardee Area (As defined by the school transport system).

7. A letter or e mail of acceptance must be returned to the office **within 14 days** of the offer of place being made. A confirmation of receipt will be issued.
8. The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse and to postpone enrolment (see [section 11](#) above)

#### **B. Procedures of the school for admission into a curricular programme or subject:**

Ardee Community School offer the following programmes subject to demand and resourcing by the Department of Education.

Transition Year (TY)

Leaving Certificate (LC) with LCVP

Leaving Certificate (LC) without LCVP

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

1. The Ardee Community School Senior Cycle Handbook is updated annually and contains details of the above programmes and all subjects offered as part of the LC.
2. Entry to specific programmes will be determined following a review of all applications from existing students first, followed by new enrolments.
3. An interview process may apply (specifically for TY and LCA) to ascertain the suitability of the student applying for the specific programme. If interviews are scheduled, students and parents/guardians will be informed of the selection criteria prior to interview.

4. Entry to specific subjects will be determined by reference to the subject choice preference forms completed by students at the end of first year (for Junior Cycle) and at the end of third year/transition year (for students progressing to LC and LCVP).
5. For senior cycle subjects (and levels), the students previous performance (in that subject) may be considered relative to the other students applying for the subject/level. The suitability of some subjects will be considered and discussed with parents/guardians for students with Special Education Needs.
6. Ardee Community School uses its administration system to optimise the subject bands and to satisfy the majority of student preferences. It should be noted that while every effort will be made to accommodate individual subject preferences, it is not always possible due to over/under demand or scheduling issues e.g. two subjects on at the one time on the timetable.

### **C. Application to Repeat a Year.**

1. All applications to repeat a year are governed by the guidelines set down in the Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter M02/95.
2. All applications must be made in writing to the Principal stating the reasons for the request to repeat the year.
3. All applications will be considered in light of places available in the relevant group, subject availability and the reasons for the repeat of year request.
4. The Principal must be satisfied that the repeat of the year is in the interest of the relevant student and other students.
5. Applications from students already enrolled and attending Ardee Community School will be considered firstly for a repeat year before new enrolments are considered.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Management of Ardee Community 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 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.

## **17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

Ardee Community School offers religious education in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities.

In addition, religious education supports the ‘multi-denominational’ aspect of our school’s ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between ‘religious education’ and ‘religious instruction’:

- Religious education is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
- Religious instruction is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

## **18.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.

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: 1.** 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 to an autism specific class in Ardee Community School due to the class(es) 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/guardian 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 into the Schools Autism Specific class due to the class(es) 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.

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.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary, Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management