

ENROLMENT POLICY

Robertstown National School

ENROLMENT POLICY

The Board of Management ('the Board') of Robertstown National School hereby sets out its enrolment policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998), and the Equal Status Acts (2000-2004). The Board trusts that this policy will be of assistance to parents in relation to enrolment matters. Furthermore, the Chairperson of the Board and the Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from this policy.

Robertstown N.S. is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school, which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed in accordance with the Schedule for Catholic Schools. While Robertstown N.S. is a school with a Catholic ethos, equality of access to educational opportunity is the key value that determines our enrolment policy. Robertstown N.S. respects and acknowledges the diverse beliefs, religions and ways of life of peoples of all faiths and none, and no one will be discriminated against unlawfully for reasons of ethnicity, disability, special educational need, gender, language, traveller status, refugee status, family or social status, religious or political beliefs or values.

General Information

School Name:	Robertstown National School
Address:	Robertstown Naas Co. Kildare
Phone:	(045) 860021
Fax:	(045) 870603
Email/Website:	robertstownns@gmail.com / www.robertstownns.ie
Ethos:	Catholic
Patron:	Bishop
Diocese:	Kildare and Leighlin

His Lordship Bishop Nulty is the Patron of the school.

At present, the teaching staff is comprised of 9 single class Teachers, 1 Principal Teacher, 1 Learning Support Teacher, 4 Special Education Teachers and 3.5 Special Needs Assistants.

The school caters for the educational needs of boys and girls by providing the full range of classes from junior infants to sixth class. Robertstown N.S. is dependent upon the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education & Skills ('DES'), and operates within the regulations set down by the DES. The school Policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

Robertstown N.S. follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the DES which may be amended from time to time in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). Our staff consists of a teaching principal, eight other mainstream teachers, two Special Education Teachers, and four Special Needs Assistants.

The school opens at 8:55 a.m. each morning. Infant classes are dismissed at 1:35 p.m. All other classes are dismissed at 2:35 p.m.

Robertstown National School

A calendar of school closings, sanctioned by the Board is issued to all parents/guardians early in the school year which may be subject to change from time to time in accordance with our Emergency Closures Procedure.

Rationale of Enrolment Policy

This enrolment policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998) in order to enable the Board to:

1. make decisions on all applications for enrolment to the school in an open and transparent manner, consistent with the ethos (Appendix 1) and Mission Statement (Appendix 2) of Robertstown N.S., all relevant Health and Safety legislation, and all other legislative requirements affecting the management and operation of the school;
2. make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants for enrolment in light of the resources available; and
3. assist parents/guardians in relation to the enrolment of their child(ren) in the school.
4. put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school

Legal Framework

Section 9 (j) of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that "A recognized school shallSubject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school".

Section 15 (2) (d) states the Board of Management shall "publish The policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected".

Section 27 (1) states that "A board shall establish and maintain procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school" and (2) that "the procedures established and maintained under subsection (1) shall facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the School having regard to the age and experience of the students, in association with their parents and teachers".

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 [Section 19 (1)] requires that a Board of Management shall not refuse to admit a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the school's Admission Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the Board of Management, shall as soon as possible (but no later than 21 days) after receiving such information "make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof"

The Equal Status Act, 2000 [Sections 5 & 7 (2)] prohibits discrimination on the grounds of "gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling Community" regarding admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction. There are limited exceptions regarding single-sex schools and schools promoting particular religious values [Section 7 (3)].

Robertstown National School

Goals

The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

- To inform parents about the school, its programmes, activities, and procedures
- To enable applications for admission to the school to be handled in an open, transparent manner
- To put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered
- To ensure that these criteria are informed by our Ethos, our Mission Statement & current legislation
- To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application

Context, Resources, School Organisation & Curriculum

The school supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school. The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parent's choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of any applicant or student. The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil – teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department from time to time.

The capacity of the school to implement its desired curriculum, its broad range of educational programmes, its breadth of extra-curricular activities, its school plan and policies are dependent on the resources it receives. Consequently, in determining its activities and programme for any school year the school must have due regard to the teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

Roles and responsibilities in developing and implementing this policy:

Roles of Board of Management

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementations and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- To decide on appeals by parents or students with respect to any decision(s) made by the Principal/Board.
- To prepare (and submit to Education Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency) a statement of Strategies regarding Attendance. The Statement of Strategy will have regard to guidelines issued by the Education-Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency and will set out the measures the Board of Management proposes to adopt:
 - a) For the purposes of fostering and appreciation of learning among students attending the school and
 - b) Encouraging regular attendance at the school on the part of all students

Role of the Principal

- To formulate draft policy in consultation with the teaching staff, students, parents, Board and Trustees
- To monitor its implementation and to ensure that it is reviewed by the review date

Robertstown National School

- To implement the policy and to support other teaching staff in their implementation of the policy
- To apply for and acquire such resources as are available in accordance with government policies
- To ensure, within the constraints of available resources, that alternative programmes are devised where necessary and practicable to meet the needs of students
- To appraise the policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate
- To ensure a register of all students attending the school is established and maintained
- To ensure that a record of attendance or non-attendance is maintained for each student registered at this school and, in the case of non-attendance, the reason for same
- Prior to registering a child, to provide the parents of an applicant with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and ensure that the parent confirm in writing their acceptance of the Code and an assurance that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code by the child
- To provide, on request, to any parent of a child registered in the school with a copy of the Code of Behaviour
- Where a child is refused admission, to advise the parents of their right of appeal to the Trustees and the Department of Education setting out Title and Address of each and advising of time limits

Role of Teaching staff

- To co-operate with the implementation of this policy
- To take the needs of all students into account in the way in which they select textbooks, plan and teach their lessons and conduct assessments
- To bring concerns about Special Needs curricular matters and information to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Special Education Teacher
- To keep parents informed through the regular Parent / Teacher Meetings and School Reports and by meeting parents from time to time as required.
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate

Role of Students

- To co-operate fully with the school in the implementations of the policy
- To offer suggestions for improving the service to students with special needs

Role of Parents

- To support the policy and to co-operate fully with the school in its implementation
- To bring to the attention of the school authorities any concern they may have in relation to the school's provision for the educational needs of their child
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate

Policy Considerations

The Board of Management of Robertstown National School reserves the right of admission if such admissions contravene Departmental guidelines on class size, etc.

Robertstown National School

The school will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, special education needs, disability, traveller status, refugee status, political or religious beliefs, family or social circumstances, provided the necessary supports are in place in the school.

The school will maintain a list of refused applicants for each class, their place on that list having been determined under the criteria outlined.

The Board of Management respects parental choice in relation to enrolment, provided the enrolment criteria are fulfilled.

The Board of Management of Robertstown National School, in its Policy of Admissions/Enrolment, respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. Consequently, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each class, bearing in mind:

- Health & Safety Concerns regarding Staff and Children
- Available classroom space
- Multi-grade classes
- Educational needs of the children
- Presence of children with special needs
- Department of Education & Skills class size directives
- Appropriate Supports and Resources are available
- Time of school year

Principles Underpinning the Enrolment Policy

Within the context and parameters of the DES regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act (1998) and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

1. inclusiveness with particular reference to the enrolment of children with a special educational need;
2. equality of access and participation in the school;
3. parental choice in relation to enrolment; and
4. respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Procedures – Application, Enrolment Criteria & Decision / Appeals

- Failure to fully complete forms may result in refusal to admit a student.
- Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage
- In applying the criteria for enrolment, the school will take into account limitations in the size of classes

Admission to the school is, of course, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources, and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission. Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources-where the resources cannot be secured, the school reserves the unfettered right to refuse admission. It is the responsibility of parents / guardians of any child to inform the school of any such needs on the enrolment application form for the child's own welfare. In this context the school authorities will have equal regard for the welfare of all the students and their right to an

Robertstown National School

education in an atmosphere that is not detrimental to their physical, emotional, moral, social or intellectual development. Failure to fully complete the application form, failure to supply any relevant information requested by the school or failure to make reasonable arrangements to meet with the school authorities to discuss the application may result in a child being refused admission to the school.

1. Procedures for Enrolment

1. Applications for enrolment are invited in January of the school year for the following September.
2. Enrolment is by application form only. An additional form must be completed in respect of children transferring from another school (available from the school). Failure to fully complete the application form, or provide false, inaccurate or misleading information will result in an application being deemed ineligible for consideration.
3. All requested information must be supplied with the application form, or where such information is not immediately available, supplied by the closing date specified for enrolment applications, unless otherwise agreed by the Board. Where all such requested information is not supplied, the Board may elect to defer or deem ineligible for consideration any application for enrolment.
4. Notices regarding enrolment, including the specified closing date for applications are communicated to parents/guardians of children in the school and to others through the school website, parish newsletter and, if appropriate, the local press.
5. Enrolment forms must be returned before the closing date specified.

Application for immediate admission in the current school year

- Application forms are available from the school secretary
- Failure to fully complete forms will result in refusal to admit the applicant
- The behaviour record of a student in their previous school shall be considered
- The attendance record of a student in their previous school shall be considered

Junior Infant Enrolment Procedure

The registration process is initiated on receipt by the school of a completed application form. This form must be signed and dated by one or both parents or guardians. The form will be date stamped on receipt by the school, and is attached as appendix 1 to this policy.

Telephone calls or personal school visits concerning enrolment will be facilitated, but are not in themselves enrolment applications.

Date of application, child's date of birth, address and telephone contact number are recorded in the School Record of Applications. The acknowledgement of an application merely confirms that it will be assessed under the criteria outlined, and does not confer any further status on that application.

Entry in the School Record of Applications means that an application will be considered in early February of the relevant enrolment year, and will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria outlined in this policy.

Robertstown National School

Following this evaluation, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board, listing proposed enrolments for the forthcoming year. Once an enrolment list is approved by the Board, all applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome, and if refused admission will be notified of their entitlement to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Please note:

Applications for admission to Junior Infant Class must be made at the very latest by the end of January of the year in which it is expected that the child will start school. The Board of Management strongly recommends that applicant children are at least four years of age on or before 30 April of the school commencement year.

Enrolment of Junior Infants

In the case of an application for enrolment into Junior Infants, the names of children for whom valid application forms have been received by the school will be placed on a waiting list until the specified closing date for application. The outcome of the enrolment process will be communicated by the Board to parents/guardians within twenty-one days of the specified closing date.

In accordance with the DES Rules for National Schools, only children aged 4 years and upwards may be enrolled.

Junior Infant Enrolment Criteria

If the number of children on the Waiting List exceeds the number of places available, the following prioritising criteria are used:

Priority	Criterion
1	Priority is given to brothers and sisters of children already in the school or who have attended the school in the past. If the class is over-subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
2	Families whose primary residence is either (a) in the immediate areas of Robertstown, starting closest to the school and radiating outwards from the school within the Parish or (b) in Allen Parish within a 2 mile distance by road from the school. If the class is oversubscribed within the application of this particular criterion, then the furthest from the school under either (a) or (b) will be eliminated first.
3	Children of current teaching staff.
4	Children of parents who are past pupils of the school. If the class is over-subscribed within the application of this particular criterion, then those whose primary residence is furthest from the school will be eliminated first.
5	If space is still available, class numbers are completed from the Waiting List, which is compiled and ordered according to the date of

Robertstown National School

	the original application. The criteria are listed in order of priority when spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and space is still available, then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritization proceeds until all places have been allocated.
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Pupils Transferring/Enrolment of Newcomer Pupils

In the event of an application being received for enrolment of a pupil transferring from another school, or an application for enrolment of a newcomer student (meaning a pupil (other than an applicant for enrolment into Junior Infants) who is newly resident in the community and has not attended a school within the State, the Board will endeavour to facilitate such an enrolment subject to the capacity constraints of the school, resources available, and all relevant Health and Safety legislation in effect at the particular time of application.

In accordance with section 28 of the Education Welfare Act (2000), it is a requirement of the Board that information concerning the attendance and the educational progress of a transferring pupil be communicated between schools. The Board reserves the right to seek such other information from the school of the transferring pupil or newcomer pupil as is deemed necessary and appropriate to assist in the facilitation of an enrolment.

Criteria for Enrolment to SI to 6^m Classes

The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for available places in the Senior Infants to 6 classes.

Priority	Criterion
1	Priority is given to brothers and sisters of children already in the school or who have attended the school in the past.
2	Families whose primary residence is either (a) in the immediate school areas of Robertstown, starting closest to the and radiating outwards from the school within the Parish or (b) in Allen Parish within a 2 mile distance by road from the school, or who are in the process of moving to either of these areas.
3	Children of current teaching staff.
4	Children of parents who are past pupils of the school.

All children enrolled are expected to comply with and support the school's Code of Behaviour, as well as the school's designated policies on Curriculum, Organisation and Management.

Enrolment of Children with Special Educational Needs

Parents/guardians wishing to enrol children with special educational needs will be required to provide a copy of their child's medical and/or psychological reports, or where such reports

Robertstown National School

are not available, to request that the child be assessed immediately. The availability of such reports is essential to the Board in determining the support needs relevant to a child's special educational needs.

Following receipt of the report, the Board shall assess the school's capacity to provide for the educational and support needs specified in the report. Where the Board deems further resources are required, it will request the DES to provide the necessary resources prior to enrolment.

Enrolment of Children learning English as an Additional Language

Where an application is received for enrolment of a child whose primary language is other than English and would be required to learn English as an additional language, the Board will profile the support services and resources available to meet the needs relevant to the child's level of language proficiency. Where the Board deems further resources are required, it may request the DES to provide the necessary resources prior to enrolment.

Decision Process for Enrolment

All decisions in relation to the enrolment of children in the school are made by the Board in accordance with this enrolment policy.

While Robertstown N.S. recognises the right of parents/guardians to enrol their child(ren) in the school of their choice, the Board has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of children already enrolled at the school, and to respect the rights of the existing school community. This requires balanced judgments which are guided by the principle of fairness and grounded in the responsibility to act in the best interests of all children concerned. To ensure this, the Board reserves the right to:

1. Determine the maximum capacity of the school, taking into consideration:
 - i. the size of available space in the school and the size of each individual classroom;
 - ii. the resources available to the school;
 - iii. mixed or multi-grade classes
 - iv. compliance with all relevant Health and Safety legislation;
 - v. the educational needs of children with special educational needs and children learning English as an Additional Language;
 - vi. the directives of the DES in relation to class size, staffing provision and accommodation which may be amended by the DES from time to time.

2. Refuse enrolment of a child where:
 - i. the pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education; or
 - ii. in the opinion of the Board, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff, and/or school property.

For the purposes of this enrolment policy, the Catchment Area shall mean the Ordnance Survey definition of the village of Robertstown.

The consideration of the age of applicants shall consist of a cut-off birth date that shall be determined by the Board at its discretion.

Robertstown National School

In accordance with the Educational Welfare Act 2000, the Board will notify parents of their decision within **twenty-one days** of the specified closing date for applications.

Appeal of Enrolment Decision

Parents/guardians who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision may appeal to the Board. Such an appeal must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged at the school within ten days of receiving the enrolment decision. The Board will consider the grounds for appeal very carefully, and may, where the Board considers it necessary, wish to meet with the parents/guardians. The Board will notify parents/guardians of the outcome of the appeal, in writing, within ten days of the appeal being lodged with the Chairperson at the school.

Parents/guardians who are unhappy with the outcome of the appeal may make an appeal to the DES (see Appeals under section 29 of the Education Act (1998) below).

Co-operation and Compliance with the Code of Behaviour

It is a condition of admission to Robertstown N.S. that parents/guardians and children accept, co-operate and comply with the Code of Behaviour in operation in the school, as well as all other policies on the curriculum, organisation and management of the school. The attached Code of Behaviour is provided to all applicants and the Board requires that all parents/guardians sign the declaration at the end of the enrolment form.

In accordance with the DES Rules for National Schools, the obligations of the Board under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (1989), and the guidelines set down by the National Educational Welfare Board, it may be necessary to suspend and/or expel a pupil from the school. The procedure for suspension and expulsion is set out in section 24 of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Suspension

Suspension will be availed of only in accordance with the prescribed Sanctions contained in the Code of Behaviour.

Expulsion

Expulsion is seen as the last resort in the management of a child's behaviour. Accordingly, it will only be utilised in accordance with the prescribed Sanctions contained in the Code of Behaviour.

Appeals Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998)

Under section 29 of the Education Act (1998), parents/guardians have the right to appeal decisions made by the Board in relation to:

1. the expulsion of a pupil from the school;
2. the suspension of a pupil from the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any school year; and
3. the refusal to enrol a child in the school.

An appeal should be made to the General Secretary of the DES on the official form provided by the DES, within forty-two days of receipt of the decision of the Board.

Robertstown National School

Evaluation

The Board of Management 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 placed on application process
- Clarity and transparency relating to the process
- Applicants informed in good time re: the status of their application, particularly in the case of refusal to enrol
- Positive Parental feedback

Monitoring & Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Board on an on-going basis. It will be reviewed by the Board annually in order to maintain an integrated and inclusive approach, taking into account school resources, changes in legislation, DES regulations, the needs of pupils and the changing profile of our community.

Review Procedure

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every two years or as the need arises. Any staff member, board member, parent, guardian or student who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Next review of this policy will occur before or during the school year 2019.

Signed:

William Byrne
Chairperson (Acting)

Date: 24/01/2016