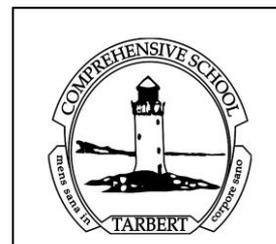


TARBERT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND PARTICIPATION POLICY



Introduction

The Board of Management of Tarbert Comprehensive School is publishing this policy as the official Admissions and Participation policy for the school. It should be read in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour and the school Information Brochure.

The policy has been approved by the school patron, Bishop Bill Murphy of the Diocese of Kerry. It is guided by and complies with the Education Act 1998; the Education Welfare Act 2000; the Equal Status Act 2000; the Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004.

In this policy all references to gender are taken to be inclusive and the term “parent” is taken to include “guardian”.

Scope

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, staff, parents and students of Tarbert Comprehensive School and has been approved and adopted by the Board of Management. The policy applies to all pupils who wish to enrol in the school and to their parents but particularly to those children who live within the local community.

Relationship to the school Mission Statement

This policy statement is in line with the objectives set out in the school’s mission statement and in the Articles of Management for Comprehensive Schools to

“provide a comprehensive system of education combining instruction in academic and practical subjects”.

The school mission statement prescribes that the school is co-educational, multi denominational and inclusive. This policy statement, therefore, provides for the admission of all boys and girls in the community regardless of religion, social class or educational need within the limits of available accommodation and facilities provided by the Department of Education and Science.

Rationale

The school is subject to all legislative requirements and regulations set down from time to time by the DES. The school is funded by the DES and is provided with staff in accordance with DES staff allocation systems. The curricular programme of the school is governed by Department of Education and Science regulation in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act of 1998.

Enrolment is limited by school capacity and by the requirements of the school curriculum and organisation as prescribed from time to time by the Board of Management and as determined by DES regulations and standards.

In assessing applications for admission the school will take fully into account:

- The rights of children within the local community.
- The rights of parents to enrol their children in the school of their choice
- The capacity of the school to provide adequately for the education of all of its pupils.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy statement are:

1. To define clearly the procedures to be followed by parents in applying for the admission of a child to the school:
 - On transfer from primary to post-primary school.
 - On transfer from another post-primary school.
 - On seeking admission to a particular programme or course e.g. Leaving Cert. First Year, Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied.
2. To define clearly the criteria to be applied in the consideration of applications in the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places.
3. To define clearly the means by which enrolment decisions may be appealed to the local school management and/or to the Department of Education and Science.

General Admission and Enrolment Procedures

1. School Capacity

The maximum school enrolment in any one year will be determined by the following:

- The current school capacity is 650 students. The numbers accepted into First Year and any other year will be determined by this overall number.
- The maximum number in a general subject class is 30 and the maximum number in science and practical classes is 24.
- If applications for enrolment into First Year are **less** than 120 or **less** than 90 or **less** than 60 and so on downwards, then the maximum enrolment in that year will be 120 or 90 or 60..... This will allow for First Year classes of no more than 30 students and science classes and practical classes of no more than 24. If demand for places exceeds the maximum enrolment figure by 18 or more then the next maximum will be utilised, up to an absolute maximum of 144 in any one year. 144 will allow for 5 mainstream classes of 30 and 6 Science classes of 24.

2. Criteria for enrolment

- Students from outside the catchment area can only be enrolled if there is available capacity.
- All students who apply to enrol and their parents will be required to sign their agreement to support the school Code of Behaviour.
- Pupils who will be under 12 years on the 1st of January following the school admission date cannot be enrolled.
- The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student where in the opinion of the Board of Management the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

Admission Procedures for First Year Pupils

1. Enrolments will begin in November of the year preceding admission and will be advertised in the local media and through the National Schools in the catchment/catchment boundary areas. Enquiries about enrolment prior to November will be recorded and information will be forwarded to these applicants once enrolment opens.
2. An Information Evening for parents and prospective students will be held in November. The closing date for completed application forms will be ten days after the Information Evening.
3. Parents will receive written notice either of enrolment or inability to enrol within twenty one days of the closing date for applications. The decision-maker on applications is the Board of Management.

The Board authorises the Principal to make decisions in respect of applications based on the procedures outlined in this document. The Board will consider any appeals that arise.

4. Students who live within the catchment area will be enrolled first. The remaining places will be allocated to applicants from outside the catchment.

In cases where demand exceeds the number of available places, preference will be given to those who already have brothers or sisters in the school and whose application has been received by the closing date.

After that has been done available places will be allocated by random selection. The Principal and Deputy Principal carry out the random selection process. Two independent monitors appointed by the Board of Management will supervise the process. All names will be drawn and either allocated the available places or placed in order on a waiting list.

5. Late applicants will be considered if places are still available; otherwise they will be placed at the end of the waiting list.
6. An assessment test for all incoming First Years will take place at the school on a Saturday morning in the second term, generally in the month of March.

Admission Procedures for students who wish to transfer from other schools

1. Every effort will be made to facilitate a student whose family is relocating to the catchment area. However this will depend on school capacity and class sizes.
2. Requests to transfer from another school in the locality will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. As a general rule such transfers will not be accepted either mid-year or mid-cycle (that is during the three year Junior Cert. cycle or the two year Leaving Cert cycle) unless there are particularly urgent and/or educationally sound reasons for the transfer. Such requests should be supported by the student's current school and/or doctor or educational psychologist.
3. Requests for enrolment into Senior Cycle – either the established Leaving Cert., the Leaving Certificate Applied (L.C.A.) or the Transition Year (T.Y.) Programme – on behalf of students from outside the catchment area will be considered subject to the availability of space in these programmes and only with a reference from their previous school. See separate Admissions Policies for L.C.A. and T.Y. In the event of there being more applicants than places, then places will be allocated by interview.
4. The closing date for applicants into the beginning of senior cycle is April 30th of the year in which they wish to enrol. Late applicants will be considered if places are still available.

Appeal Procedure in the Event of a Refusal to Admit a Pupil

- Parents (and students who have reached the age of 18) have a right to appeal the refusal to the Board of Management.
- Appeals must be made within two weeks from the date that the decision of the Principal was notified to the parent (or student) in writing.
- In the case of Tarbert Comprehensive School, the appeal shall be made in the first instance to the Board of Management of the school.
- Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, provides that an appeal may be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in respect of a decision by a Board of Management, to refuse to enrol a student in the school.

Participation Policy

- (a) The Board of Management is aware of its obligations to provide maximum accessibility of students to the school and to promote the right of parents to send their child to the school of their choice. The school is also required by law to have regard for the efficient use of resources and will have regard to these considerations in managing the admission and participation of students.
- (b) It is the aim of the school to enable students to participate as fully as possible in all school programmes, both curricular and extra-curricular, and to enable this to happen, the Board has put in place procedures to help keep students informed of all school activities and opportunities. These procedures are also aimed at facilitating the involvement of students in the operation of the school, having regard to their age and experience. As a means of progressing this involvement the Board has enabled the students to establish a Student Council and will assist the students as far as is possible in setting up and managing the council.
- (c) Students with disabilities and special needs are encouraged to enter the school and participate in all programmes on offer to the extent that their doing so is consistent with their own safety and best interest and the safety and best interests of other students. The school will, in so far as resources permit, provide special facilities to enable them to participate in the life of the school, unless to do so would give rise to excessive costs that the school could not reasonably be expected to bear.
- (d) **Suspension and Expulsion**
The Board of Management is required by law to maintain reasonable safety throughout the school and on all school activities, and discharges this duty through its employees, the Principal and teachers. The maintenance of safety and good order requires the drafting and implementation of a Code of Behaviour which is required to set out the means by which the school staff will deal with behaviour that is considered unacceptable.

The two most serious sanctions available to the school are suspension and expulsion. Expulsion is seen as the last resort and will only be resorted to when all other sanctions have been exhausted and the student and parents have been made aware, by notice in writing, that expulsion is being contemplated by the Board and invited to make their views known to the school. In every case it will be preceded by a suspension from school activities to enable this exchange of views to take place.

Suspensions will be availed of either after all of the minor sanctions have been exhausted, or as a response to a single breach of school discipline so outrageous that any lesser sanction would be inappropriate in the circumstances.

The Principal is empowered to impose a suspension and is required to inform the Board of all of these. The Board alone has the power to expel. The procedures for managing suspension and expulsions, and all details of appeals in these situations, are set out in a separate policy document which forms part of the Code of the Behaviour of the school.

Review and Implementation Procedures

The Admissions and Participation policy was approved by the Board of Management on 10th February 2009 and will be reviewed at least once every three years by the Board of Management or by a committee nominated by the Board. It may be reviewed at any time to consider amendments forwarded to the Board by any member of the school community – parents, students or staff.

This policy will be made available to all parents who apply to enrol and will be disseminated every year through the national schools in the catchment/catchment boundary area. It will also be given to all members of staff and is available at all times from the school office.

LCA Admission Policy

1. The school runs a Leaving Certificate Applied Programme if there is sufficient demand from suitable candidates in the relevant Year Group. The programme is offered subject to the school's ability to provide the necessary staffing, which is determined by the Dept. of Education & Science Guidelines. The school is committed to the LCA programme and will always endeavour to provide it but there may be years when numbers are not viable.
2. Students will not be accepted into the LCA programme once the programme has commenced.
3. Preference will be given to those students who were enrolled in Tarbert Comprehensive School for Junior Cert. exam. Admission to students from other schools will be in exceptional circumstances only and will be considered on a case by case basis.
4. Acceptance into the Leaving Cert. Applied Programme is not automatic and is based on the following criteria:-
 - The potential of the student to benefit from the course.
 - The student's previous school attendance and behaviour record.
 - The student's academic record.
 - Teacher recommendation.
 - The capacity of the student to be a positive influence in the programme.
 - Advice from outside agencies e.g. the Health Service Executive or the National Educational Psychological Service.
5. An interview will be conducted with each applicant by a panel of teachers which will include the Leaving Certificate Applied Co-ordinator, the Year Head and the Career Guidance Counsellor. Additional members of staff may be invited to join.
6. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of each prospective Leaving Certificate Applied student will then be invited to discuss the student's decision and future prospects as a result of pursuing the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.
7. In the event of a student being refused a place in the LCA Programme, parents may appeal the decision to the Board of Management.

Transition Year Admission Policy

- 1) The school runs a Transition Year programme if there is sufficient demand for it in the relevant Year Group.
The minimum number of students required to run the programme is 20 and the maximum for any one group is 24.
The minimum number to run two groups is 40, the maximum for two groups is 48 and so on upwards in multiples of 20 and 24.
- 2) In determining admission to Transition Year preference is given to those students who were enrolled in Tarbert Comprehensive School for Junior Cert. Admission to students from other schools is considered on a case by case basis and subject to the availability of a place and the suitability of the prospective student.
- 3) Acceptance into the Transition Year Programme is not automatic and is based on the following criteria:-
 - The potential of the student to benefit from the course.
 - The student's previous school attendance and behaviour record.
 - The student's academic record.
 - Teacher recommendation.
 - The capacity of the student to be a positive influence in the programme.
 - Advice from outside agencies e.g. the Health Service Executive or the National Educational Psychological Service.
- 4) All applications for Transition Year are considered under the criteria outlined above by a panel of teachers which includes the Year Head, the Class Teacher, the Guidance Counsellor and the Transition Year Co-ordinator.
This panel of teachers decides on the suitability of the applicants. They may in some cases deem it necessary to interview a student and to consult with that student's parents before a final decision is made.
- 5) In the event of there being more demand for places from students in Junior Cycle than there are places available then places will be allocated by random selection from among the group of students whom the above panel considers will benefit from the course.
- 6) In the event of a student being refused a place in the T.Y. Programme, parents may appeal the decision to the Board of Management.