ADMISSION POLICY OF

Tarbert Comprehensive School

School Address: Kilpadogue, Tarbert, Listowel, Co. Kerry V31WD66 Roll number: 81006S

School Patron/s: Bishop of Kerry & the Minister for Education & Skills

Ratified by the Board of Management on October 6th 2020

Updated by the Board of Management on January 31st 2023

Updated by the Board of Management on September 30th 2025

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 the School has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 24th September 2020. 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 Tarbert Comprehensive School 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 and this Policy

Tarbert Comprehensive School is a co-educational, multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kerry and the Minister for Education.

Our School provides 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**.** Comprehensive Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our School was established under agreed Articles of Management and opened on a green-field site on September 1st 1973. The values of the Irish State through the Minister for Education and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Bishop of Kerry are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Tarbert Comprehensive 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.

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 provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Our 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 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.

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.

In Tarbert Comprehensive 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.

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 Skills.

The School's Mission Statement is as follows;
In Tarbert Comprehensive School we seek to foster mutual respect and an atmosphere of trust. We promote a healthy work ethic and a love of learning in a spirit of collegiality and co-operation so that all may reach their full potential. The ethos of the Comprehensive School is one of equality and inclusiveness, welcoming and nurturing all of the diverse abilities and talents of the various communities we serve. We value each other, facilitate our special needs students, celebrate our achievements and look forward to becoming an increasingly multi-cultural school. Each day we aim to live up to our school motto:

"Mens Sana in Corpore Sano", a Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body.

(*Formulated by the Students, Parents, Staff and Management of Tarbert Comprehensive School, Partners in Education, April 2006. Ratified by the Board of Management, May 2006.)*

The objectives of this Policy are:

1. To define clearly the procedures to be followed by parents in applying for the admission of a child to the school:
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 reviewed/appealed to the Department of Education and Skills.

3. Admission Statement

Tarbert Comprehensive 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.
Our Comprehensive ethos is one of equality and inclusiveness. We welcome all abilities and aim to nurture all talents. We facilitate our special needs students in every way we can and we look forward to becoming an increasingly multicultural school.

Tarbert Comprehensive 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.

Tarbert Comprehensive 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.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the School/Special class

Tarbert Comprehensive School welcomes pupils with Special Education Needs and in line with the EPSEN Act 2004 recognises ''the need to provide education of people with such needs shall wherever possible take place in an inclusive environment.''
Please see separate Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy.

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the School as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled.

Tarbert Comprehensive School currently has an ASD Class to provide an education exclusively for students with this specific category of SEN as outlined in the SEN Policy.

Eligibility Criteria for Enrolment in the ASD Special Class
In accordance with *Circular 0039/2025* and *Section 62(2)(b) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018*, applications for enrolment in the ASD Special Class must include:

1. A professional report or assessment from a *psychologist, psychiatrist, or multidisciplinary team*, confirming:
    - a diagnosis of autism in accordance with *DSM-IV/V* or *ICD-10/11*; and
    - a demonstration of an understanding of the complexity of the child's overall level of need, as evidenced in the professional reports; and
    - a clear professional recommendation stating that placement in a *special class for students with autism* is the most appropriate educational setting to meet the child's needs, with a rationale for this recommendation.
2. A letter from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) confirming that the child is known to the NCSE and that the child has the required diagnosis and professional recommendation for a special class for autism.

Enrolment in the ASD Special Class is subject to the availability of places and the sanction of the NCSE and the Department of Education in respect of overall provision and forward planning.

The Board of Management and School Leadership Team will consider all applications in a fair and transparent manner, consistent with the school's inclusive ethos and in consultation with the NCSE, the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) and the Department of Education as appropriate.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)

b) a parent of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of

behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

c) The special class attached to Tarbert Comprehensive provides an education exclusively for students with autism spectrum disorder and the school 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

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the School is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

(a) Those students that are resident within catchment. The School catchment is in a wide geographical area of rural North Kerry and West Limerick. It extends from Asdee, Co. Kerry in the west to Moyvane, Co. Kerry in the south and Loughill, Co. Limerick in the east. The Shannon Estuary constrains is the natural catchment boundary to the north.
(b) Those students from outside catchment who have siblings currently enrolled in the school
(c) Those students from outside catchment who had siblings previously enrolled in the school

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 arrangement will apply:

(d) spaces will be filled through a process of 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).
(e) a waiting list established

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 pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
(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:
    - admission to the special ASD class 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;
(e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, 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 his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
    (Other than, in the case of siblings of a student attending or having attended the school)
(g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Tarbert Comprehensive School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

  (Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our School.

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 our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 19 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Tarbert Comprehensive School, you must indicate—

(i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

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 Tarbert Comprehensive 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 of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the School is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make

all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or

(iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' 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 Tarbert Comprehensive 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 Tarbert Comprehensive 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.

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 Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.
Late applicants will be considered if places are still available; otherwise they will be placed at the end of the waiting list.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year from other schools

A. Admission of students to other years (i.e. Other than the intake group) and

Tarbert Comprehensive School will consider and process all applications and in accordance with this policy the applicant will be admitted if there is a place available. If not, they will be placed on waiting list for any vacancies arising during that year.

Places will be filled on a first come first served basis.

B. Admission of students during the school year

If places are available the applicant will be admitted, otherwise they will be placed on a waiting list to fill vacancies arising in the year concerned. Places will be filled on a first come first served basis.

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

The Board of Tarbert Comprehensive 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.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction/worship

Tarbert Comprehensive 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 'r*eligious education'* and *'religious instruction'*:

- *Religious education* is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular 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.

In Tarbert Comprehensive, Religious Education (RE) is a compulsory part of the core curriculum and is guaranteed tuition time as part of the founding Articles of Management of the School since 1973.

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 and Skills.

The Board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the School being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the School being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a

student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this School to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (See Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (See Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.