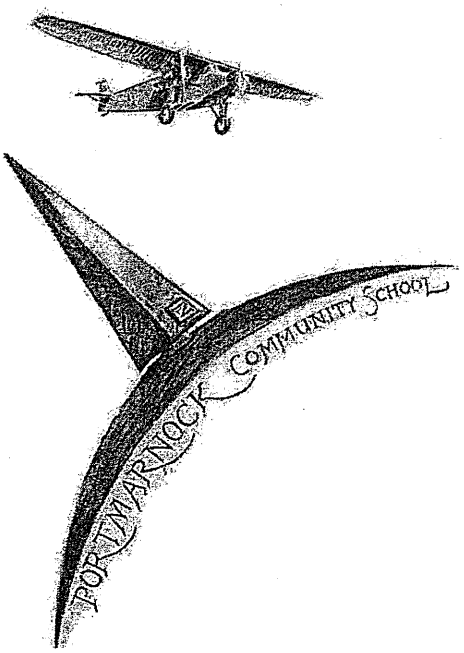


Admissions Policy 2027-28

Portmarnock Community School,
Carrickhill Road, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin

Roll number: 91324P

School Patrons: Loreto Trust, the Archbishop of Dublin and the DDLETB

Patron Approval

Approved by the Loreto Education Trust on 22 September 2026
Approved on behalf of the Archbishop of Dublin on 12 October 2026

Signed: Michael Behan
Michael Behan, Chairperson
Date: 12/10/2026

Signed: Helen Tobin
Helen Tobin, Principal
Date: 12/10/2026

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy (the "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 Portmarnock Community School has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents/guardians of students attending the school.

The Policy was approved by the school patrons in September and October 2026. It is published on the school's website www.portmarnockcommunityschool.ie and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Portmarnock Community School's (the "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 of applicants 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 of a Community School under the joint patronage of Catholic and ETB Patrons

Portmarnock Community School is a co-educational, multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin, Loreto Education Trust and DDLETB.

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.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened in 1979 on a greenfield site, to meet the second level education needs of the town of Portmarnock. It was one of the first community schools to be built in Ireland. The values of DDLETB as a multi-denominationalState Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Archbishop of Dublin and the Loreto Education Trust, are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of o ur school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Portmarnock 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 their 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 in our school, Portmarnock Community 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 Portmarnock 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.

Portmarnock 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 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.

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.

3. Admission Statement

Portmarnock Community School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

1) The gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the stude◆t concerned,

2) The civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

3} The family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

4) The sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

5) The religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

6) The disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

7) The ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

8) The Traveller Community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or

9) 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.

Portmarnock Community School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation 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.

Portmarnock Community School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67{4)(b).

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/ ASD Class

Portmarnock Community School welcomes all students, including those with special educational needs. The school will use the resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation where possible for students with disabilities or special educational needs.

The Board of Management needs to be aware of any special needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed if possible. We strive to facilitate a smooth transfer from Primary to Post-Primary education and to provide support for these students throughout their time in Portmarnock Community School.

In making provision for special needs students, the following information is required; has the student had access to any of the following resources:

1. Special needs assistant or classroom assistant

2. Special class

3. Help, for specific needs, from any resource teacher

4. Assistance with behavioural modification

5. Psychological assessment (report to be provided)

6. Any additional resources to help with their special needs

7. Help in areas including visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or emotional disturbance

8. Any resource in relation to travel or mobility etc.

If an expert report is provided, it should include a workable strategy for addressing the needs, allowing for the resources available.

The Board of Management, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of the special needs students can be met.

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/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 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

Eligibility & Admission Criteria

Portmarnock Community School's Admission Policy welcomes all students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education. The school aims to provide an integrated and inclusive education.

The Board of Management reserves the right to regularly update/amend the Admission Policy. The operative Admission Policy for any year shall be that policy which is adopted by the Board of Management in the school year preceding the Application.

Each year the Board will decide in advance the number of 1st Year students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education, having regard to health and safety considerations, the standard of education it hopes to provide, the welfare of students and teachers, and the suitability of its accommodation for the proper provision of education.

Students who are eligible for Admission to the mainstream school:

- Having reached the required age: 12 years on the 1st January in the calendar year following the child's entry into First Year in Portmarnock Community School.
- Having completed Sixth Class in Primary School or its equivalent.
- Those students, along with their parent(s)/guardian(s), who are willing to accept the ethos of Portmarnock Community School.
- Those willing, with parent(s)/guardian(s), to accept the Portmarnock Community School Code of Behaviour. Confirmation is required, by way of signature(s) that parent/guardian(s) and student(s) accept the Code of Behaviour.
- Those whose parent(s)/guardian(s) are willing, if required, to furnish Portmarnock Community School with two different, recent Utility Bills as proof of residence. Parents/Guardians who provide false or misleading information (e.g. use an address which is not their principal private residence at the time of application) will render their application null and void.

Portmarnock Community School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a unit to provide an education exclusively for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The ASD Class

Portmarnock Community School has two classes catering for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with a maximum of six students in each. The ASD classes 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.

Admissions Policy to the ASD class is attached as Appendix 2 to this Policy.

The application process for 1st Year is by way of application through the school's online admissions platform, provided by Unique Schools (USEnrol), or the CAPPS Application Form for applicants from CAPPS Education Association primary schools (see priority categories 3, 4 & 9 in Section 6 below). CAPPS applications continue to be processed manually using the CAPPS Application Form, in accordance with the arrangements set out below.

- Applications for 1st Year will be accepted via the school's online admissions platform (Unique Schools/USEnrol), available annually following the Portmarnock Community School Open Evening and accessible via the school website www.portmarnockcommunityschool.ie. A hardcopy application pro◆ess remains available upon written request from the school office, to anyone who requests it, as per the Annual Admissions Notice. It is important for prospective parents to attend the Open Evening but it is not obligatory.
- Applicants whose primary residence is in Portmarnock will be asked to provide proof of address in the form of 2 original current utility bills at the time of application.
- Letters of Conditional Acceptance are sent by the school to all successful external applicants' parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) intending to accept a place for their child are requested to return the completed and signed Acceptance/Non-Acceptance Form by a strict deadline as per the Annual Admissions Notice.

Note: Where an issue arises in relation to the residence status of a child applying in any particular year, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to satisfy the Principal/Board of that status to the Principal's/Board's satisfaction.

The fully completed Application Form should be signed and submitted to the School Office by the closing date which is noted on the Application Form and the Annual Admission Notice.

Applications received after that closing date will be considered a late application and will only be considered after all other applications have been processed.

CAPPS Applicants

The CAPPS Application Form (Central Applications Post Primary Schools Association) is for those students whose primary residence is not in Portmarnock and who are attending St Helen's, St Marnock's or another primary school within the CAPPS Education Association (see Appendix 1).

- The CAPPS Application Form is distributed to 6th class students of primary schools in the CAPPS Education Association in September.

- The completed CAPPS Form is returned to the child's primary school by a date published by the CAPPS Education Committee.
- The completed CAPPS Form is forwarded to Portmarnock Community School by the CAPPS Education Committee.
- Letters of Conditional Acceptance are sent by the school to all successful CAPPS applicants' parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) intending to accept a place for their child are requested to return the completed and signed Acceptance/Non-Acceptance Form by a strict deadline as per the Annual Admission Notice.

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.

"Sibling" shall be defined as "any brother or sister, or step-brother or sister, of any child attending, or who will be attending Portmarnock Community School during the proposed academic year of entry".

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:

- If the number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces in any category, the places will be allocated on the basis of an independently adjudicated draw. In the case of twins/triplets entering the lottery, where one is successful, they will not be split up.

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) The payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;

b) A student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;

c) The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents/guardians;

d) A requirement that a student, or their parents/guardians, attend an interview, Open Day or other meeting as a condition of admission;

e) A student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of their family attending or having previously attended the school; (other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school. In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criterion to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice);

f) The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, 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.

Prioritisation of Applicants

Applications for places in 1st Year will be prioritised using the categories below (in strict order, with number 1 given first preference and number 11 given last preference):

1. Students whose primary residence is in Portmarnock and have siblings currently attending Portmarnock Community School

2. Students whose primary residence is in Portmarnock.

3. Students from St Marnock's NS and St Helen's SNS who select Portmarnock Community School as their choice on the CAPPS application form and have siblings currently attending Portmarnock Community School

4. Students from St Marnock's NS and St Helen's SNS who select Portmarnock Community School as their choice on the CAPPS application form.

5. Students with siblings currently attending Portmarnock Community School.

6. Children of Portmarnock Community School daytime staff.

7. Students whose siblings are past pupils of Portmarnock Community School.

8. Subject to a maximum of 25% of the enrolment figure, students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) are past pupils of Portmarnock Community School.

9. Students attending other primary schools in the CAPPS Education Association who selected Portmarnock Community School as their choice on the CAPPS application form.

10. All other applications received before the closing date.

11. Applications received after the date set out for submission of applications in the Annual Admissions Notice and published annually on the School website.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Portmarnock Community 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 CAPPS Form/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.

Students with Special Education Needs

Portmarnock Community School strives to create an inclusive environment for all students, including those with additional needs. The school's ability to provide for students with special education needs is restricted to the resources made available to do so from the Department of Education & Skills. Applicants with Special Education Needs must meet the entry criteria set out for all students in this policy. The regular admissions procedures must also be adhered to. The existence of special education needs does not give an applicant a prioritised entry entitlement.

The school's Special Needs Policy sets out how the school will:

- Take steps at an early stage to identify those children that enrolled at the school with special needs within the terms of the School Admissions Policy, and to become familiar with their particular educational needs.
- Request a copy of the child's medical/psychological report/individual educational plan, if available.
- Request assessment in order to assist the school in establishing educational and training needs of the child relevant to their disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.
- Request, in a timely manner, from the Department of Education and Science any additional resources deemed necessary e.g. Special Needs Assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport etc.
- Meet the parents/guardians to discuss the child's needs, the special staffing or equipment resources received by the school from the Department of Education and Science, to assist that child achieve their potential and the school's actual capacity to meet the child's needs.
- Do all it possibly can to identify, plan, and provide for the needs of a child with special needs who is accepted as a student at the school under the terms of the admissions policy.
- Liaise and dialogue with the SENO and NCSE to clarify on the resources for an individual student with SEN.

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 Admission 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 18 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Portmarnock Community School, you must indicate:

a) 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

b) Whether or not you have applied for and are 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 Portmarnock Community School where:

a) It is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.

b) 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.

c) 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 code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to them and their child and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code; or

d) 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 Portmarnock 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 Portmarnock 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.

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 Admission Policy, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

15. Procedure for admission of students to other years and during the school year

Portmarnock Community School will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to our school.

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:

- The waiting list for years other than first years opens annually on 1st March in the academic year preceding the request for entry to Portmarnock Community School.
- Applications to years other than first for the subsequent academic year should be made in writing to Ms. H Tobin, Secretary to the Board of Management or by emailing admissions@portmarnockcommunityschool.ie.
- All decisions relating to applications to years other than first are made at the discretion of the Board of Management.

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

- All waiting lists remain open for the duration of the academic year and will cease operating on the final day of the school year.
- Applications made during the school year will be placed at the appropriate number on the relevant waiting list.

Places made available in any year group will be dealt with by the Board of Management, in accordance with this Admission Policy.

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

The Board of Portmarnock 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.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

For schools with Religious Patrons, it is accepted that the NCCA Religious Education Programme may form part of the core curriculum and where there are no elements of Religious Instruction or Worship, the exemption outlined in CL13/2018 does not apply.

Students attending Portmarnock Community School do not receive denominational Religious Instruction or Worship. Students in Portmarnock Community School follow the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Programmes as set out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

Portmarnock Community School is a multi-denominational school and the Religious Education provided to our students is inclusive and focused on the pursuit of Knowledge, Skills and Understanding. The content prescribed in all of the Religion syllabuses is designed to cater for students of all faith traditions and students of none. It is intended to ensure that students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretation of life.

The 1998 Education Act states that we must promote the spiritual and moral dimension of the student. This is the promise of holistic education - a promise to which the NCCA Religious

Education Curriculum contributes uniquely. Religious Education has developed in such a way that it is open to all participants, contributing to the spiritual and moral development of students whatever their belief system: religious or secular. It promotes social cohesion and encourages tolerance and acceptance, allowing students to develop the skills and attitudes they need to engage positively, respectfully and constructively in a pluralist society.

18. Reviews/ Appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian 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 of Management 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/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 to 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.

The Board of Management ratified this Admission Policy, incorporating the amendments described on the title page, at its meeting on: 22 September 2026

Approved by the Patrons:

Loreto Education Trust: 22 September 2026

Archbishop of Dublin: 12 October 2026

Signed: Michael Behan (Chairperson) **Date:** 12/10/26

Signed: Helen Tobin (Principal) **Date:** 12/10/2026

Appendix 1

The Primary Schools within the CAPPS Education Association are:

- Belmayne Educate Together N.S.
- Burrow N.S., Sutton
- Gaelscoil Mfde, Kilbarrack
- Holy Trinity S.N.S., Donaghmede
- Kinsealy N.S. North Bay National School Project
- North Bay Educate Together N.S.
- Pope John Paul II N.S., Malahide
- Scoil Aine, Raheny- G.N.S.
- Scoil Assaim, Raheny- B.N.S.
- Scoil Cholmcille, Donaghmede
- Scoil Eoin, Greendale
- Scoil Mearn6g, Portmarnock
- Scoil Mhuire, Howth
- Scoil Mhuire agus Iosaif, Bayside
- Scoil Neasain, Harmonstown
- Springdale N.S., Raheny
- St Andrew's N.S., Malahide
- St. Benedict's, Raheny
- St Brendan's N.S., Artane
- St. Brigid's, Killester- B.N.S.
- St Brigid's, Killester- G.N.S.
- St Eithne's, Edenmore
- St. Fintan's, Sutton
- St. Francis of Assisi, Belmayne
- St. Helen's, Portmarnock
- St. Laurence's National School (formerly St. Peter & Paul), Baldoyle
- St. Malachy's, Edenmore - B.N.S.
- St. Paul's, Ayrfield
- St. Oliver Plunkett's N.S., Malahide

Appendix 2

Admission Policy to the ASD Class

This policy must be read in conjunction with and is part of the overall Admission Policy for Portmarnock Community School. The aim of Portmarnock Community School is to offer a positive meaningful educational experience to the student that allows them to develop to their full learning potential, in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. After a period of time observing, assessing and interacting with the student, an Individual Education Plan will be developed following consultation with Parents/Guardians and with other relevant professional staff (e.g. NEPS Psychologist, Coordinator/Teacher(s) of Special Educational Needs/ASD, Occupational Therapist, School Principal/Deputy Principal etc.), as deemed appropriate.

The aim of the ASD class is to offer a specific learning environment within a mainstream post-primary school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream educational activities that are available and that are deemed appropriate to the ongoing education of the student.

External Support Services

Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). These services include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy. The Board of Management at Portmarnock Community School has no function in accessing these services, but merely acts as a relevant conduit for their provision, where available and possible.

Furthermore, Portmarnock Community School cannot guarantee any additional service or support that may be available to the student through the offices of the HSE. Portmarnock Community School does not have the resources to follow up on these services and it is a matter for the Parents alone to ensure that all such possible support services are being accessed and availed of.

Pre-enrolment

All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The assessment must be in line with the following criteria for applying for enrolment to an autism class as per DE Circular 0039/2025:

- Diagnosis of Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multidisciplinary report)

AND

- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports

AND

- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same

AND

- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism

The revised eligibility criteria provide greater clarity for families and schools that a child has the required diagnosis and professional requirement for a special class for autism.

A prospective student for the ASD class must meet the above criteria and have a professional recommendation, from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multidisciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism-specific class in an ASD Unit. The withholding of such reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.

Parents should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in each ASD class is six students. Where places are available, any child who meets the eligibility criteria set out in this policy will be admitted. Where the class is oversubscribed, the selection criteria set out below will apply.

The Parents of the applicant must accept and agree to the Portmarnock Community School Code of Positive Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

The ASD classes at Portmarnock Community School will only cater for children that are 12 years or more, and less than 18 years of age, on the 1st of September of the school year in question.

Enrolment

Applications to the ASD Class will only be considered if the student's needs fall within the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this class. Subject to this requirement, in the event of oversubscription, the following criteria for admission to the ASD class will apply, in order:

1. The greatest level of Special Educational Need, as determined by the Principal in consultation with the NCSE and/or NEPS, having considered the Relevant Report in respect of the child.

2. Current students enrolled in the school who meet the eligibility criteria and have been verified by the NCSE for admission to a special class.

3. Siblings of current students in PCS who apply to the ASD Class.

4. Eligible applicants resident within Portmarnock.

5. Eligible applicants not resident in Portmarnock but for whom the PCS ASD Class would be nearest to their home residence.

6. All other eligible applicants.

Having met the criteria for admission to the ASD Class, applications are considered against the published selection criteria above. Places will be offered in the first instance to those who meet the first criterion. Subsequently, where the class still has places available, the remaining applicants are considered against the next criterion, and so on, until all available places have been offered and accepted.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, Portmarnock Community School will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

The school will share relevant information, including waiting list information, with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for the purpose of forward planning for special education provision, in accordance with Circular 0039/2025 and any subsequent guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Applications received after the closing date for the ASD Class will be added to the bottom of the existing waiting list. This applies regardless of whether the applicant is already enrolled in the mainstream school or resident in the local area, and such applicants will not be prioritised ahead of others already on the waiting list.

Application Process

An online Enrolment Application, a copy of which is available from the school, should be fully completed and submitted by the parent on behalf of the applicant. The closing date for receipt of such completed applications by the school is published in the Annual Admission Notice for the relevant year.

This Enrolment Application should be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate of the applicant and by all up-to-date and pertinent educational psychological assessment(s) and diagnostic report(s). Proof of address is necessary.

Only applications that meet the criteria for enrolment, subject to available space and maximum student numbers, will be considered.

Students who are currently enrolled in an ASD Class in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer during the course of the school academic year.

Students enrolled in an ASD Class in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer at the end of a school academic year unless the family has moved residence to Portmarnock.

The advice, support and recommendation of the Special Educational Needs Organiser {SENO) for the area/region, based on the needs of the applicants, will be considered in the decision-making process associated with enrolment of applicants in the ASD Class.

It is important that Parents/Guardians note that Portmarnock Community School may, in certain clarified circumstances and following an assessment and investigation, be unable to meet the special educational or physical needs of the applicant on the grounds that the applicant is deemed a risk, on health, safety, welfare or security grounds, to themselves and/or others.

The Board of Management will make the final decision on all applications to enrol. On acceptance of a place:

- The Parents of a child being offered a place in the ASD Class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Education Team and the Principal/Deputy Principal of the school, to discuss the placement/enrolment of their child. Any information requested by the Parent will be provided at this meeting.
- The Parents may be requested to consent to a visit by a member of the Special Educational Needs professional staff at Portmarnock Community School, to visit the existing school placement of the student concerned in order to observe the student in a classroom situation.
- The Parents will be invited to accompany their child to visit Portmarnock Community School ASD Class and meet staff.
- The Parents may be consulted about the Individual Education Plan for their child.
- The NEPS psychologist and SENO will be appraised of the Education Plan.
- A child may be phased gradually into the special class in the ASD Class through a mutually agreed process between Parents and the Management of the school.
- Where it is deemed appropriate, a student in the ASD Class will be assigned to an age-appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes by school management.

The placement of every student within the ASD Class will be subject to regular review, by school management, staff and, where appropriate, the professional services external to the school. Decisions will follow regarding whether to:

- Continue within the ASD Unit at Portmarnock Community School or to integrate fully into the mainstream post-primary school, or
- Seek an alternative and more appropriate educational placement for the student, where Portmarnock Community School is unable to meet the educational needs of the student.

In such an instance the support and assistance of the staff at Portmarnock Community School will be available to assist the family in securing a more suitable learning environment in another educational institution, for the student concerned.

Code of Positive Behaviour

As already indicated above, the Parents of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to the Portmarnock Community School Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy.

All efforts will be made by staff at the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the student's Individual Educational Plan. All students including those with special educational needs are subject to the school Code of Behaviour and the terms of the Health and Safety Statement adopted by the Board of Management at the school.

The Board of Management at Portmarnock Community School reserves the right of admission and to refuse to enrol a student, within the terms of this policy. Parents/Guardians of applicants who are refused admission to Portmarnock Community School will be advised of their right to appeal the matter to the Secretary General, DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Ratified by Board of Management on: 22/9/2026

Signed: Michael Behan
Michael Behan, Chairperson

Signed: Helen Tobin
Helen Tobin, Principal