



## **Admission Policy Foxfield Special School 2024-2025**

**School Address:** Briarfield Villas, Greendale Road, Kilbarrack, Dublin 5. D05 AT26 AND 6B Drynam Road, Swords Enterprise Centre, Swords, Co. Dublin

The two locations of Kilbarrack and Swords are the ONE school under the one Board of Management, and have the one Roll Number of 20279M, and therefore follow the same Admission Policy. Admission numbers are inclusive of the two locations and based on the two combined locations. Places will be offered as per the availability in either location. There will not be a choice of location.

**Roll number: 20279M**

**School Patron/s: St. Michael's House**

### **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.

St. Michael's House Special School Foxfield 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.

St. Michael's House Special School Foxfield 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.

The policy was approved by the school patron in October 2023. 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 Foxfield Special School's 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**

Foxfield Special School is a special school under the Patronage of St. Michael's House. The school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness of all students
- Equality of access and participation in the school of all students
- Parental/guardian choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

The school is managed by a Board of Management (BOM) representative of the Patron, Parents/Guardians, School staff and the community.

## **3. Admission Statement**

St. Michael's House Special School Foxfield 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.

### **Special Schools**

Foxfield Special School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

Foxfield Special School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a dual diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder along with a moderate to severe General Learning Disability.

The school is coeducational catering for pupils aged 4 to 18 years. The BOM is bound by the DES rules which provide that pupils may only be admitted from the age of 4 years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years, and as per DES regulations, students leave school at the end of the school year in which they turn 18. To facilitate this age band, the range of classes extend from primary to post primary and are based on relevant and appropriate peer groupings. There is capacity for 9 classes in the school. There are currently 4 primary and 5 post primary classes. Currently there are 2 individualised services in addition to the nine classes; this is not a fixed allocation and is based on individual application.

### **Catchment Area**

The Catchment area for this school is North Dublin City and County bounded by the River Liffey, the N2 to the west and as far north as the Dublin County boundary.

### **Governance**

The school operates within the regulations as outlined in the Rules for National Schools and the relevant circulars and directives issued by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). It is funded by grants from the DES. The school is under the administration of the Primary / Special Education Sections of the Department of Education & Skills. Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Ancillary Staff and Bus Escorts are funded by the DES. Additional staffing allocations are determined by the National Council for Special Education.

The school has 1 Administrative Principal, 1 Administrative Deputy Principal, 1 Teaching Deputy Principal, a Behaviour Analyst, 13 teachers and 40 SNAs. The school also currently employs 23 external bus escorts, a part-time caretaker and a school secretary.

### **School Ethos**

SMH special schools are multi-denominational, co-educational schools for children with moderate, severe and profound learning disabilities where the children are treated with dignity and respect and are enabled to participate, to the best of their ability, in an educational programme tailored to their individual needs to help support them to live a full and independent life within their families and their communities.

St. Michael's House Schools are multi-denominational and welcomes children of all religions and none. There is no religious instruction provided. A values-based programme is integrated into the life and ethos of the school and seeks to promote respect, love, tolerance and caring for one another and our environment.

### **Curriculum**

Our school is a stimulating centre of education where each person is cherished as an individual whose ability, potential and needs are recognised and nurtured. The curricular programmes provided by the school are adapted to meet the particular educational needs of each child and a variety of methodologies and strategies are adopted to maximise the pupils' learning potential. The teachers, staff and multi-disciplinary team provide a challenging,

sensitive and caring environment which fosters personal, social, academic development, independence and achievement. All pupils have an Individual Education Plan designed specifically for them.

St. Michael's House Special Schools deliver the state curriculum under the Guidelines for Students with General Learning Disabilities and where applicable, programmes that lead to ASDAN and/or Junior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Awards.

#### **School Year**

The school operates a school calendar for primary schools which is effective from the week of 1<sup>st</sup> September to the week of 30<sup>th</sup> June with traditional openings and closing at Summer, Christmas, Easter and Mid-terms as laid down and directed in Circulars issued by the DES regarding Standardisation of the School Year.

#### **School Multi-Disciplinary Team –School Aged Team (SAT)**

In addition to fulfilling the formal role of School Patron, as required by the DES, St. Michael's House as part of PDS (Progressing Disability Services) provides clinical support to the school in the form of a School Aged Team (SAT) which combines the expertise from the fields of psychology, psychiatry, social work, speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, paediatrician and dietician. Access to the SAT is on a referral basis. Referrals are then prioritised by the team and there may be a waiting list. New applicants may be discussed with the SAT team as part of the admission process.

Teaching and school staff collaborate with clinicians as appropriate to enhance the educational potential for students and where required to devise guidelines and programmes to maximise the child's educational and social functioning.

*Please note: successful applicants may not have automatic access to additional supports such as Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, behaviour analyst support, clinical support or nursing staff. If a school place is offered, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is the agency that processes applications for SNAs and bus escorts. The NCSE requires that a pupil's need for access to such additional resources must be clearly outlined in the relevant professional reports. Decisions relating to clinical support will be made by the clinical team.*

## **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.

*Note: The Code of Behaviour includes the Positive Behaviour Support & Use of Restrictive Practice Policy and a copy will be provided to parents.*

Foxfield Special School provides an education exclusively for students with a dual diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder along with a Moderate or Severe General Learning Disability and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

**An application will be valid when the documents listed below (see 1 -4) have been received by the school by the final date for receipt of applications as published in the Annual Admissions Notice.**

- 1. Fully completed application form signed by one or both parents / guardians**
- 2. A birth cert for the student**

3. **Proof of address for the student (utility bill, social welfare letter or similar, dated within the last four months)\*\***
4. **Psychological assessment (completed not more than 2 years earlier). It is important that this report clarifies a diagnosis of Autism, the cognitive level of functioning of the student (Moderate or Severe), the primary recommendation is for a place in a special school and where appropriate, the need for additional support of an SNA &/or bus escort, clearly stating the grounds for each.**

**\*\*Used in the case of oversubscription only.**

**Note: The school does not facilitate visits prior to the closing date for applications. However, an appointment will be made with parents/guardians whose children are being offered a place to view the school and to collect documentation related to the admission process.**

## **6. Oversubscription**

In the event that the school is oversubscribed or exceeds the number of vacancies in an age / needs appropriate class within the school, 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:

- **The student lives within the designated catchment area of the school**
- **The availability of an age &/ needs appropriate class to meet the needs of the student**

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:

- **Priority will be given to applicants in order of age-oldest first for each class age group within the school.**

## **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) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;

- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, 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 his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
- (f) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

*The special educational needs of the student will be taken into account to ascertain that they have the assessed disability catered for in this school (ASD and Moderate or Severe GLD)*

*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 (prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020, up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).*

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Foxfield Special 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 18](#) below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Foxfield 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 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 Foxfield Special 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.

Section 66 (6) allows a school to provide a patron or another Board of Management with a list of the students in relation to whom-

- (i) An application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) An offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) An offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

## 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 Foxfield Special 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. The waiting lists will be organised in accordance with the available spaces in an age/needs appropriate class.

Placement on the waiting list of Foxfield Special 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.

## **15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

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:

Places will be offered to students where vacancies arise in age and/or needs appropriate classes throughout the school, priority given to eldest child as per section 6.

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:

Where a vacancy exists or becomes available in an age and /or needs appropriate class, the next suitable applicant on the waiting list will be offered the place.

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

The Board of Management of Foxfield Special 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**

There are no religious instruction programmes in Foxfield Special School. The Board of Management will however endeavour to facilitate any parent/guardian who wishes their child to participate in preparation for religious ceremonies on a withdrawal from class basis.

## **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** in writing 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.

\*Please refer to DES Circular 0069/2020 for DES timeframe.

### **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.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on ..... (date)

Signed: .....

Chairperson.