Admissions Policy



2025 - 2026

Admission Policy of Scoil Mhuire Lacken

School Address: Scoil Mhuire Lacken, Ballinagh, Cavan

School Website: www.lackennationalschool.com

Roll number: 17479 D

School Patron: Bishop of Kilmore

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 30th 0f June 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 Scoil Mhuire LAcken 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

Scoil Mhuire Lacken is a Catholic all girls and boys primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Kilmore.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, a living relationship with God and with other people
- including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
- the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith
- and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Lacken Primary shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school. This policy is linked to other relevant policies within the school and in particular our Code of Discipline.

Mission Statement

Scoil Mhuire Lacken is a Catholic School which strives to promote Christian values of love, God and love one another. We are an integral part of the community of Lacken, and in partnership with parents, the Church and the wider community we aim to nurture and develop Christian values through participation in the 'Grow in Love' programme, providing opportunities for prayer, sacramental preparation through our school ethos.

Here at Scoil Mhuire Lacken, we aim to foster and develop each of our students in all dimensions of their life in term of moral, cognitive, physical, social, spiritual, imaginative and aesthetically. We also seek to develop and encourage pupils to draw on their strengths / gifts in achieving their full potential and unique ideas. Our underpinning philosophy is *'Mol an Óige agus tiocfaidh'* our school motto *'Praise the youth and they will flourish'.*

Our School Ethos

Our school is a Catholic School with a Catholic Ethos. Non Catholic pupils attending our school are respectfully given the freedom to adhere to their own beliefs and practices.
Our Aim is to create an environment where each child is valued as a person and is provided with a variety of opportunities enabling her to live as a child and developing all aspects of the person; spiritual, emotional, moral, social, intellectual, cultural and physical.

We seek to develop in the child a positive self-image and a respectful caring attitude towards others. We encourage each child to take an active part in her own development on all levels so that she can:

- enjoy being at school and contribute to making school life a good experience for all.
- be ready and able to benefit from second level education.
- go on to take her place in society as a happy fulfilled and responsible adult.

Since teaching/learning is a collaborative effort we involve parents, teachers, pupils and the wider community. We endeavour to challenge the gifted child and to give special support, care and attention to children with any level of additional needs.

3. Admission Statement

Scoil Mhuire Lacken will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- the gender of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the civil status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the family status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the sexual orientation of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the religion of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the disability of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned

- if the student or the applicant in respect of the student is part of the Traveller community, or
- if 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.

Scoil Mhuire Lacken 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 Education 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. Scoil Mhuire Lacken 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 ($B) of the Education Act.

All Denominational Schools

Scoil Mhuire Lacken, is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

Scoil Mhuire Lacken is a mainstream school and has no special class attached.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

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

Scoil Mhuire Lacken is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school

Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

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:

The following is the Selection Criteria:

1. Children whose siblings are now or were formally enrolled in the school. Siblings who are already enrolled in the school (step brothers/sisters, half-brothers/sisters and foster siblings). If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant until all paces are allocated.
2. Children who live in the Parish of Lacken / Potahee (2 recent utility bills to confirm same).
3. Children of permanent members of staff.
4. All other children who apply.

Should over subscription occur, the oldest child in each category will be given priority. If space is still available, class numbers are completed from waiting list. The criteria are listed in order of priority when spaces are allocated under criterion 1 and space is still available, then criterion 2 comes into play and so on. This prioritisation proceeds until all places have been allocated.

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:

Junior Infant Classes:

The oldest will be given priority – all children being enrolled in Junior Infants shall have reached their 4th birthday by September 1st on year of enrolment.

Children with the same Birthday:

Lots will be drawn in the school by the Chairperson and another member of the Board of Management to decide on same.

In the event in Multiple Births:

Both / all will be admitted by the way of exception.

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,

other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at:

1. an early intervention class
2. an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time.

(b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school; (other than in relation to a fee charging school or a plc or further education and training course run by a school in respect of those courses)

(c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;

other than in relation to:

1. admission to (a) special class or (b) a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and /or
2. admission to an Irish language school, in accordance with the provisions of section 62(9) of the act.

(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

(other than in the case of admission to the residential element of a boarding school or to a plc of further education and training course run by a school)

(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 this school including the selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and (2) parents 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 admissions notice)

(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 Scoil Mhuire Lacken 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 Scoil Mhuire Lacken, 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 Scoil Mhuire Lacken 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 Scoil Mhuire Lacken 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 S 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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 notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

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:

Applicants for entry to classes are submitted at any time.

While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management is also responsible to respect the rights of the existing school community, in particular, the children already enrolled.

Assisting the school in such circumstances the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:

- Size of available space in classrooms
- multi-grade and split classes
- Department of Education maximum class average directives.

If space is still available, applications will be considered by the Board of Management inn order of priority by the criteria listed 1, 2, 3 and so on. The prioritisation proceeds until all places have been allocated.

If over subscription occurs the same selection criteria will apply as mentioned in the Oversubscription section.

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:

Procedures regrading this are the same in the preceding paragraph.

16. Declaration in Relation to the Non-charging of Fees

The board of Scoil Mhuire Lacken 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

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. Reviews/Appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parents/guardians of 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 parents/guardians of 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.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Lacken on Date.

Signed: Tony Riley Date: 23/09/2025

(Principal)

Signed: John Donohoe Date: 23/09/2025

(Chairperson)

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS NOT PART OF THE ADMISSIONS POLICY.

Rationale behind Admission Policy re Oversubscription to Early Intervention Classes

Reasons behind criteria re selection of pupils in the Early Intervention Classes priority youngest:

We see EI as referring to pupils prior to school going age=U 4.

Hence we feel our priority is pupils of 3 years/younger pupils:

- Who cannot access any other ASD specific facility
- Who have been diagnosed at this young age due to the severity of their Autism
- Who can complete the 2 year programme of early intervention
- The longer they attend EI the greater the chance they have of reinforcing skills and behaviours learnt in their first year and building upon those to achieve other personal targets in the following year
- This causes less disruption to the class with the majority of pupils staying for a 2 year cycle as opposed to pupils coming and going every year as is the case with 4 and 5 year olds.

Also please note for older pupils 4 years upwards they have the option to attend Primary School and get support or to attend an ASD class attached to mainstream.