



RCS Admissions Policy

Revised & Ratified by BOM
October 2nd

2018

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential.

**Ramsgrange
Community
School**

Introduction

1. All decisions in relation to pupil enrolment at Ramsgrange Community School are made by the Board of Management of the school in accordance with school policy, the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2,000 and the Equal Status Act.
2. The Board of Management retains the right to restrict intake below the number that the physical capacity of the school indicates if it considers that the admission of some pupils would be detrimental to the interests of those pupils or to the pupils already attending the school or to prospective pupils. **The current maximum number of admissions into First Year is 120 students.**
3. All prospective students must meet current Department of Education and Skills requirements.
4. It is expected that an application to attend Ramsgrange Community School indicates an acceptance of all school regulations by both parents/guardians and pupils.
5. Parents/Guardians applying on behalf of a prospective student will be deemed to have read all the information set out in this document.

Mission Statement

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students' person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential.

Relationship to the School Mission Statement.

This policy statement is in line with the objectives set out in the school's mission statement and in the Deed of Trust for Community Schools to:

'Provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the community, combining instruction in academic and practical subjects'.

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

Rationale

Ramsgrange Community School is subject to all legislative requirements and regulations set down from time to time by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The school is funded by the DES and provided with staff in accordance with DES staff allocation systems.

The curricular programme of the school is governed by the Department of Education and Skills regulation in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act of 1998.

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

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

- a) The rights of parents to enrol their children in the school of their choice.
- b) The capacity of the school to provide adequately for the education of all its' pupils.

This policy also aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school:

1. To make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with its Ethos, the Mission Statement of the school and legislative requirements.
2. To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of resources available to it.
3. To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school.

The Education Welfare Act 2000 (Section 19 (1)) requires that a Board of Management shall not refuse a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the school's Admission Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the Board of Management shall, as soon as is practicable (but not later than 21 days) after receiving such information 'make a decision in respect of application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof'.

The Equal Status Act, 2000 (Section 5 & (2)) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of 'gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, race or membership of the Travelling Community' regarding the admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction.

The school will comply fully with this legislation and render an application void, which does not comply with this legislation – Section 19 (2).

1. Background

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students of Ramsgrange Community School and has been approved and adopted by the Board of Management. The policy applies to all pupils who wish to enrol in the school and to their parents.

This policy is rooted in the school's fundamental aim of providing a diverse and quality system of Post Primary Education open to all the children of the community. The policy sets out procedures to be followed in all the following circumstances.

- 1.1 Students applying for a place in First Year

1.1.a Students applying for enrolment to the ASD Class

1.2. Students transferring from another Second Level school or applying for a place in any other year group or programme

1.3. Students applying to repeat any year of any programme within the school including repeating the Leaving Certificate Programme.

1.4. Students from within the school applying for a place on any programme within the school (Leaving Certificate Traditional, LCVP, Transition Year, Junior Certificate Schools Programme etc).

The policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The School's Mission Statement
- The School's Code of Behaviour
- The School's Homework Policy
- The School's Attendance Policy
- The School's Policy on SEN
- The schools' Policy on Substance Use
- Guidelines for Parent/Teacher Communications & Meetings
- The School's Policy on Anti-Bullying
- The School's Policy on Internet Acceptable Use – AUP including use of mobile phones
- The School's Policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education
- The School's Assessment and Change of Level Policy
- The School's Subject Choice Policy
- Other relevant policies. All school policies are available on the school website www.ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie

2. Context:

Our school is a Community School and as such supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school.

The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission.

Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources – where the resources cannot be secured the school may refuse admission.

The school is managed by a Board of Management, which operates under the Deed of Trust for Community Schools. The school has an active Parents' Association and Student Council.

3. Management, Teaching & Financial Resources:

The school is funded by the Department of Education & Skills as part of the free education scheme. The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil-teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department of Education & Skills and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes, etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department from time to time.

The capacity of the school to implement its desired curriculum, its broad range of educational programmes, its breadth of extra-curricular activities, its school plan and policies are dependent on the resources it receives. Consequently, in determining its activities and programmes for any school year the school must have due regard to the teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

4. Organisation:

Appendix 1 contains relevant information about the organisation of the school. In addition, the school issues several Information Bulletins for parents each year setting out relevant information for the current year including dates of holidays, dates of house examination, dates of Parent-Teacher meetings etc.

5. Curriculum:

The school offers a broad curriculum designed to meet the needs of a wide range of abilities and aptitudes. The details of the curriculum on offer are set out each year in the School Prospectus which is available from the school on request. The curriculum is subject to change from time to time as deemed appropriate by the school. The school also endeavours to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The provision of these activities is subject to a range of factors and the list of activities is subject to change from time to time.

6. Objectives:

The objectives of this policy statement are:

6.1. To define clearly the procedures to be followed by parents/guardians in applying for the admission of a child to the school:

6.1.1. On transfer from primary to post-primary school

6.1.2. On transfer from another post-primary school

6.1.3. On seeking admission to a programme or course e.g. Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied.

6.2. To define the criteria to be applied in the consideration of applications in the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places.

6.3. To define clearly how enrolment decisions may be appealed to the local school management and/or to the Department of Education & Skills.

7. Policy Content:

Procedures – Application, Enrolment Criteria & Decision, Appeal.

7.1. Application Procedures – into First Year

7.1.1. All students entering 1st Year must be a minimum of 12 years of age on the 1st of January in the calendar year following entry. (Original birth certificates will be requested.)

7.1.2. The school will have an Open Day/Night each year circa. September/October. This will be published by contacting all Primary Schools in the catchment area and by advertising in the local press.

7.1.3. Application forms will be distributed to all 6th class students in our school's catchment area/ and to others on Open Night, together with School Prospectus, Admission Policy and Opening & Closing Dates of application procedure.

7.1.4. Application forms will be accepted on Enrolment evening which takes place in October each year. Incomplete forms will be returned to parents.

7.1.5. Application Forms will be accepted up to and including February 1st in the year of enrolment. For late applications see page 12.

7.1.6. Further information will be requested through the school's enrolment form.

7.1.7. The school may request to meet with students and parents.

7.1.8. All parents and students will be required to sign the School's Code of Behaviour.

7.1.9. All students will be required to sit an Entrance Assessment Test as set out in local agreements. Students may only sit this Assessment if they have made a formal application to enrol to the school. A candidate who fails to sit the Entrance Assessment without good reason puts their application to enrol at risk. The Board may decide to revoke an earlier decision to admit such a student and to offer the place to student on the waiting list.

7.1.10. It will be the policy of the school to accept all students from its catchment area regardless of ability or special educational needs except where there are limited facilities, shortage of places etc. Criteria for admission from outside catchment area are outlined later in this policy.

Students will be accepted from all backgrounds as well as those from minority groups. If a situation arises where Ramsgrange Community School receives more enrolments than it can cater for the following will apply:

- i. Priority will also be given to brothers and sisters of pupils from the catchment area already enrolled in the school.
- ii. Priority given to pupils living in the catchment area and attending National Schools in the catchment area.
- iii. Students living in the catchment area and attending National School outside the catchment area will also be given priority.

If more students enrol from the catchment area than the school can cater for then the following will apply:

- i. Priority to brothers and sisters attending the school, then
- ii. Lottery.

7.2. **Applications from Outside the Catchment Area – First Year.**

As outlined in exceptional circumstances students from outside the Ramsgrange Catchment Area (as outlined by the Department of Education & Skills) will be admitted to Ramsgrange Community School, if they can be accommodated. If students cannot be accommodated in individual classes because of class size difficulties, they will be immediately informed, and the process will be terminated.

The following procedure will apply:

1. Application Form completed
2. Interview with parent/ guardian and student
3. Suitable reference from previous school
4. Good attendance record – as determined by the school authorities
5. Full disclosure of all relevant information
6. Good behaviour record of previous school
7. Receipts of written assurances regarding full compliance with school rules and regulations
8. Overall capacity of school to meet educational needs of the child
9. Class size
10. Capacity of the school / sufficient time to deliver programme (late applications only).

All applications must be submitted with full documentation to the Board of Management for decision.

Failure to complete the necessary documentation listed above or to supply any other relevant documentation / information requested by the school may result in an applicant being refused admission to the school.

7.3 Enrolment into ASD Class

Important note: The ASD class has been sanctioned only for students (subject to numbers as determined by the DES and NCSE) with a diagnosis of Autism i.e. DSM-IV, DSM-V or ICD-10.

This Admission Policy stipulates that a student may not apply for a place in both mainstream school and the RCS ASD class.

An application to the RCS ASD class carries with it an acknowledgment that said student requires the support only provided by the ASD programme.

Enrolment of First Years into the ASD Class:

- 7.3.1. Only applications from 6th class National School/ Special Schools will be considered.
- 7.3.2. All applications must be received by the school on or before the 31st October of the preceding year in line with current enrolment procedures as set out herein.
- 7.3.3. The following conditions, along with the general criteria outlined in our admissions policy, must be satisfied for enrolment to be considered:

a) The student seeking a place in the ASD class must have a psychological/psychiatric report which clearly specifies a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Diagnosis must be determined by the DSMIV, DSM-IV-TR, DSM-V or ICD-10, from an ASD Multi-Disciplinary team. The pupil must also have a recommendation for placement in a Special Class or Unit attached to a mainstream secondary school.

b) A detailed psychoeducational assessment which contains information on the pupils results on a standardised test of cognitive ability. Pupils assessed cognitive ability should not be lower than the Mild General Learning Disability range. Ideally a Speech and Language report and an Occupational Therapy report within the previous two years will be provided. Indicators are that the needs of a student with intellectual ability assessed as being in the Moderate General Learning Disability range and who is not capable of any significant level of integration are best met in a Special School placement. The ASD class will not cater for students with severe or profound learning difficulties. Evidence available must suggest that the student has the adaptive skills and cognitive functioning to enable them to access and learn in a mainstream environment to some degree.

c) Each application should be supported by a report from the primary school or previous secondary school if transferring. This report should include the student's academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs and outline the current extent of social inclusion.

7.4. Enrolment Procedure

- 7.4.1. All vacancies in the ASD Class will be filled as per the criteria outlined in our admissions policy and subject to the conditions above.
- 7.4.2. Students who meet the criteria for enrolment but are not offered a place for September will remain on that year's waiting list if a mid-academic year vacancy arises.
- 7.4.3. Where an application for a student to be enrolled specifically in the ASD Class is unsuccessful, this student will not be accommodated in the mainstream intake as Ramsgrange Community School would not have the capacity to meet their needs. (see 7.4.6. below)
- 7.4.4. The number of students enrolled in the ASD Class each year will depend on the resources and ability of the school to integrate the students into mainstream classes. The total capacity of the ASD Class is six students and this will not be exceeded. The number of students enrolled each year is determined in consultation with the NCSE.
- 7.4.5. The inclusion operates on the understanding that the intellectual ability of students enrolling in the special class is like the profile of the population of students attending the mainstream classes in the school and the student would have the ability to integrate into mainstream classes according to individual need.
- 7.4.6. The Board of Management, as is the case with all admissions to the school, makes the final decision on applications for admission to the Unit. In deciding, the Board of Management will have regard to the recommendations of the Admissions Advisory Panel. The Board of Management reserves the right to appoint other or substitute members to the Admissions Advisory Panel as deemed necessary and to seek external expert advice if required. The Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School reserves the right to refuse enrolment, to rescind an offer of enrolment or current enrolment to any student, in exceptional cases. Such exceptional cases could arise where:
 - 7.4.7. The student has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
 - 7.4.8. The Student poses an unacceptable risk to themselves, other students, school staff or school property.
 - 7.4.9. Admission of the student would make it impossible to deliver, or have a serious detrimental effect on, the provision of an educational service to the student and other students.
- 7.4.10. An annual review of the student's placement within the ASD Class will be held by the ASD Class team together with relevant personnel/ professionals to ensure that the ASD Class continues to be the most suitable placement option to the student.
- 7.4.11. All potential applicants may be visited by a member of the admissions committee to observe the student in their existing placement and to provide feedback to the admissions committee.

7.5. Application Process

- 7.5.1. Parent/ Legal Guardians are required to indicate on standard enrolment form that they request consideration for a place in the ASD Class for their child.
- 7.5.2. Applications for enrolment will be considered for eligibility by the Admissions Committee which will comprise of: Principal and/or Deputy Principal, SEN Co-ordinator(s), Member of the ASD Class Team, Guidance Counsellor.
- 7.5.3. Completed application form and all the required documentation must be received in the school no later than October 31st of the preceding year to entry.
- 7.5.4. Where the number of applicants to the ASD Class exceeds the places available in any year the normal enrolment policy of RCS will apply.
- 7.5.5. Late applications to the ASD Class will not be considered. Such applicants will be placed on a waiting list in order of receipt of application and will only be offered a place in the ASD Class whereby there is a space in the class and the overall enrolment in the year does not exceed X students. Late applications will not supersede those to the ASD Class or mainstream made before the closing date for receipt of applications who are already on the waiting list.
- 7.5.6. If parents/ guardians decide to avail of a place in another school rather than accept a place in the ASD Class they are required to inform the Principal in writing immediately. This will enable the school to offer the place to another student.

7.6. ASD Class notification of vacancies

- 7.6.1. The Principal will notify the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) of the number of vacancies in the existing classes for the following year. The SENO will also be informed of the names of students on the application list.
- 7.6.2. When the places for the following school year have been filled, the Principal will inform the SENO of the names of the students who remain on the waiting list without places.
- 7.6.3. The SENO will also be informed if vacancies arise during the school year following recommendation from the admissions committee.

7.7. ASD Class Transition Programme

- 7.7.1. The SEN Co-ordinator and/or ASD Class Co-ordinator will endeavour to visit schools and observe incoming students in their existing placements. This will happen during the second or third term of the school year.
- 7.7.2. Transitional Programmes will be arranged on an individual basis with successful applicants in consultation with parents, educational staff and other relevant personnel.
- 7.7.3. Parents will be invited to meet Principal and/or Deputy Principal for all incoming students in May.

Applicants are advised that the Board of Management meets six times each academic year.

8. Entrance Assessment Test:

8.1. Students will normally be advised of the outcome of their application prior to sitting for the school's Assessment Test.

8.2. All applicants shall be obliged to sit for the school's Assessment Test, which shall be held on a day, time and place determined by the school. A candidate who fails to sit for the test without good reason (as judged by the school) will put their admission at risk. The Board may decide to revoke an earlier decision to admit such a student and to offer the place to a student on the waiting list.

8.3. The Assessment Test will be used to help the school identify whether a student has special educational needs and the results may be used as a basis for seeking additional teaching or other resources from the Department of Education & Skills, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy.

8.4. The Assessment Test guides the school in its assignment of students to certain classes. Details of Class (Appendix 1)

9. Application for other Year Groups:

9.1. Application Forms are available from the Office, Ramsgrange Community School. These will be accompanied by the Admission Policy/ Code of Behaviour/ Opening and Closing dates.

9.2. Any application must be fully completed together with a medical form. Incomplete application forms will be returned to parents.

9.3. Normally applications should be submitted by April 1st. Late application procedures are outlined later in this policy.

9.4. All applications must be accompanied by a reference from previous school.

9.5. Applicants will be required to furnish details about previous 2nd Level education including school reports and other relevant information. The procedures as outlined for students entering first year from outside the catchment area also apply.

9.6. All applicants will require the following:

9.6.1. Approval of Board of Management/Interview with Principal/Deputy Principal/ Written Assurances regarding compliance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

9.6.2. All new applicants will initially be accepted on a trial period –Contract to be signed by parents/Students.

9.7. Selection Criteria: The following will determine the success of the application:

9.7.1. The capacity of the school to cater for the applicants needs e.g. Subject choice, class size, AEN Needs

9.7.2. The behaviour record of a student in their previous school

9.7.3. The attendance record of a student in their previous school

9.7.4. Late applicants to year Groups: In the event of applications being received after September 1st but before January 1st in any academic year from students wishing to enter a year group in that academic year the following will apply:

9.7.4.a All procedures as outlined previously for 'Application for other year groups'

9.7.4.b Class Size – certain subjects (i.e. practical classes must comply with Department of Education & Skills capacity limits.

9.7.4.c Subject Choice / availability of subjects.

9.7.4.d There are certain restrictions on class sizes also in line with Department of Education & Skills guidelines and with school policy such as Transition Year and LCA. Details of such restrictions may be had from the school.

9.7.4.e Applicants must have studied subject in previous school.

9.7.4.f A period of at least one week will pass between the acceptance of a student and the student commencing classes to allow time for the Year Head and Tutor to disseminate relevant information regarding the new student's arrival.

Because of the lateness of application, applications received after January 1st in a school year will not be accepted.

10. Admission to specific programmes or subjects (or subjects at a specific level) to students from the school.

If there are limits in LCA, Transition Year, LCVP, or specific subjects the following will apply:

10.1. Behavioural record

10.2 Attendance record

10.3 Performance in subject previously. If the student has not taken the subject previously the Principal will liaise with Guidance Counsellor and subject teachers in order to ascertain the viability of this option.

10.4 Student's commitment to the programme modules and completion

10.5 Student's willingness to participate in all aspects of the programme

In relation to the above courses an application process will apply. The school will be the final arbiters of who enters any of the programmes listed above.

11. Repeat a Year:

11.1 Applicants must meet with Principal and outline reasons.

11.2 Department of Education & Skills forms to be completed.

11.3 Since places are limited the following will apply:

11.1.1. Application of Department of Education & Skills criteria

11.1.2. Attendance Record

11.1.3. Behaviour Record & Work Ethic

12. Admission to Repeat the Leaving Certificate:

12.1 Applicants must meet with Principal or Deputy Principal or Year Head

12.2 Department of Education & Skills forms to be completed and guidelines to be followed.

12.3 Since the school does not provide a specific Repeat Year Course and if spaces limited the following will be considered:

12.3.1. Subject availability

12.3.2. Class size

12.3.3. Behaviour Record & Work Ethic

12.3.4. Attendance Record.

12.4. There is a fee of €200 payable to Ramsgrange Community School for all repeat students. (This fee is refundable on students attaining 90% attendance)

13. Appeals Procedures:

13.1. All applicants will receive a written answer to their request as set out above. Where possible, this will be done within 21 days of receipt of the application. Where it is not possible to decide on an application at the time it is received, the procedures to be followed will be explained in writing to the applicant within 21 days of receipt of the application. All applicants have the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management. This will be dealt with as soon as possible.

- 13.2. A decision to refuse admission may also be appealed to the Department of Education & Skills as outlined on page 15 of this policy.
- 13.3. The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by a representative staff group for ratification by the Board of Management annually. Any staff member, Board member, parent, guardian or student who is unhappy with the content of the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

The Appeals Procedure:

How to appeal a refusal to enrol in Ramsgrange Community School:

All applicants will be informed, as soon as practicable, but not later than 21 days, after a parent has provided, in accordance with this policy, such information as may be prescribed by the Minister there under, the board of management of the school concerned shall decide in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof.

All applicants have the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management. This will be dealt with at the next scheduled Board of Management meeting.

Appeals should be made in writing to;

The Secretary to the Board of Management,

Ramsgrange Community School,

Ramsgrange,

New Ross,

Co. Wexford

Y34 YY17

An Appeal against Permanent Exclusion, Suspension or Refusal to Enrol

An appeal may also be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills in respect of a decision by a board of management or a person acting on behalf of a board of management to:

1. permanently exclude a student from the school,
2. or suspend a student from the school for a cumulative period of 20 school days in any one school year,
3. or refuse to enrol a student in the school.

Circular letter M48/01 Appeal Procedures Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 applies.

How to Apply

Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit,

Department of Education and Skills,

Friar's Mill Road,

Mullingar,

County Westmeath.

N91 H30Y.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed regularly in light of experience. It will be reviewed following normal school procedures.

Signed: _____, Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____, Chairperson to the Board of Management

Date: _____