

Admissions & Participation Policy

Dunshaughlin Community College: 2015-2016

Introduction

The enrolment Policy of Dunshaughlin Community College has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the EPSEN Act 2004 and the Equal Status Act 2000 in order to assist Parents and Guardians of prospective pupils in relation to enrolment matters. The Principal as Secretary to the Board of Management will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Scope

This policy applies to students who wish to enrol in First Year for the following academic year, students of the college who wish to apply for a particular curricular programme, and students who wish to transfer from another post-primary school.

School Mission Statement

‘We are committed to the provision of a complete education maximising student potential to the highest possible standards through a highly committed staff in a modern well equipped college. We strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring, supportive but challenging and well structured environment.
A demanding environment can also be a caring environment.’

Relationship of Policy to DCC’s Mission Statement

This policy has been developed in line with the mission statement of Dunshaughlin Community College. The school endeavours to provide an education for all its students, that is one which has as its aim the development of all aspects of the individual – aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, religious, social and spiritual, for personal and family life, for working-life, for living in the community and for leisure.

Dunshaughlin Community College operates within the regulations laid down by the D.E.S and Louth & Meath Education Training Board and follows the curricular programmes of the D.E.S. both of which may be amended from time to time in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act, 1998.

The Board of Management of Dunshaughlin Community College while formulating this policy have shown due regard for the provisions of the **four principle** Acts which govern

education policy, namely, the Education Act, 1998; the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000; the Equal Status Acts, 2000 & 2004 and the Vocational Education Amendment Act 2001

In keeping with the above-mentioned legislation the Board through its admissions policy supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly in relation to the enrolment of students with special needs or those disadvantaged by socio-economic circumstances.
- Equality of access and participation in the school.
- The right of parents/guardians to send their children to a school of their choice.
- Respect for the diversity of traditions, values, languages and ways of life in modern Irish society.

Rationale

In the context of enrolment, the Education Act 1998 aims to promote (i) “equality of access to and participation in education and to promote the means whereby students may benefit from education” and (ii) “the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents’ choice having regard to the rights of patrons and the effective and efficient use of resources” (Objects of the Education Act 1998 (c) & (e)). Under this act the school is obliged to “establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility” (Education Act 1998, Section 15 (2) (d)).

Policy Content

Management

The Board of Management of Dunshaughlin Community College endeavours at all times to carry out its duties in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education Act, 1998. (For details of the structure of the Board and a list of current members see appendix 2.)

Organisations

- (i) *Parents’ Association.* The school has a Parents’ Association.
- (ii) *Student Council.* In accordance with Part VI, S.27 of the Education Act 1998, Dunshaughlin Community College has a Student Council.

Curriculum

In keeping with the education principles and the requirements as set down in the Education Act, 1998, Dunshaughlin Community College endeavours to provide a curriculum which will meet the needs, aptitudes and abilities of all its students. (For details of programmes currently on offer see Appendix 3). The curriculum is apt to change from time to time, either because of changes initiated by the D.E.S. or due to changes in the financial and staffing resources available within the school.

What constitutes a completed Application Form?

An application for enrolment in Dunshaughlin Community College is defined as a completed Dunshaughlin Community College Enrolment or Transfer Form, along with required supporting documentation as described on the form. The application to enrol becomes 'live' from the date of receipt of **all** required documentation.

First-Enrolment Procedures

2.1 Applicants for admission in 2015/2016 & First Year 2016/2017

Parents or guardians seeking to enrol a child in their care to First Year in Dunshaughlin Community College are requested to return a completed Enrolment/Application Form together with required documentation, to the College by the date specified at the Colleges Open Night and College publications each year. The names of children from whom completed Enrolment Application Forms have been received will be placed on a waiting list.

It is a condition of enrolment that the parents/guardians of children applying for places give their consent in writing to comply with the College's Code of Conduct.

Equality of access is the key value that determines the enrolment of children to the College. No child will be refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language accent, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious or political beliefs and values, sexual orientation, family or social circumstances.

2.2 General Principles applied to Enrolment Applications

While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of Dunshaughlin Community College must also respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the pupils already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. Assisting the College in such circumstances, **the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children to be enrolled** bearing in mind:

- Available space in classrooms and not to exceed limits dictated by Health & Safety requirements.
- Availability of grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education & Skills.

- The ability of the College to cater for the educational needs of children.
- Department of Education and Skills maximum class size directives.
- The culture and ethos of the College community.

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any year exceeding the number of places available (due to the non-availability of suitable accommodation, teaching staff or other resources), the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment.

1. Children who reside within the catchment (as defined by the board of Management).
2. Brothers and sisters of pupils already attending the College.
3. The children of College staff members.
4. Children resident within the designated catchment area, but attending a National School other than those in the designated catchment.
5. Children who attend schools in the designated catchment but reside outside the designated catchment.
6. Students from the following designated feeder schools: Kiltale Primary School; Kilmessan National School; Lismullen National School; Cannistown National School;
7. Students who have moved into the designated catchment or in the process of such a move provided proof of address has been provided.
8. Other: This category is subject to application in writing to the Board of Management.

The Board will review and consider these criteria and the weightings associated with them on a yearly basis.

Pupils falling within the agreed criteria will be offered provisional places in First Year for the following academic year. Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list from which any subsequent vacancies in the year group will be filled.

The order in which a waiting list should be compiled will be as follows:

1. Applications received before the closing date (which will be determined by school management to facilitate planning) will be placed on the waiting list ordered by lottery, from the list of applicants.
2. Applications received after the closing date will be placed on the waiting list after (1) above, in order of date and time received.

Following the receipt of applications and the provisional allocation of places, pupils are required to attend for an assessment test. Failure to attend for registration/ assessment test without furnishing adequate notice may lead to the offer of a place being withdrawn.

The College will arrange an information night for parents/guardians prior to the commencement of the academic year.

2.3 Decision-making Process

In the normal course of events it is envisaged that enrolment in Dunshaughlin Community College will be ratified as a matter of course. In situations where this is not the case the Principal will refer the particular case to the BOM for its decision.

All decisions in relation to the enrolment of students in Dunshaughlin Community College are made by the BOM of the school in accordance with school policy; the Education Act 1998; the Education Welfare Act, 2000 and the Equal Status Act, 2000.

Specific Requirements.

- The student must have reached eleven years of age by 1 January of the year preceding entry into Dunshaughlin Community College in accordance with Dept. of Education and Skills regulations.
- The applicant's birth certificate, two passport-sized photos (and a copy of a utility bill to confirm proof of residence in the catchment area may also be required) should accompany all applications on the formal registration day.

Contract of Learning /Behaviour.

Central to the operation of an effective and caring school is a just and fair code of behaviour to which all parties – parents/guardians, students, staff and management - fully subscribe and which has regard to the rights and responsibilities of all concerned. It is an essential prerequisite of enrolment in Dunshaughlin Community College that the school's code of behaviour is studied in advance by the parents/guardians/students concerned and that its acceptance is acknowledged in writing.

Yearly Commitment in Subsequent Years.

Parents/guardians are required to renew their acceptance of the Code of Behaviour **and other policies relevant to good order and behaviour** prior to the commencement of each school year. The student journal will be used for this purpose.

Other Programmes:**Transition Year**

Places will be allocated on the following basis:

- All students who wish to be considered for Transition Year, will be expected to fill out an application form in January (subject to change) and return the fully completed form to the school by the designated due date.
- Interviews (Group and /or Individual interviews) may then be held to determine the suitability of the students to partake in the programme. The student's behaviour, work ethic and attendance records in previous years will be examined, along with their application form and these will be taken into consideration before offering a place to the student.
- A student's age may be considered in determining if it is in the best interest of the student to partake in Transition Year.
- A waiting list will be created following the initial filling of the agreed number of places on the programme. This will be determined following a meeting of the Board of Management of the College.
- A student may lose his/her place in Transition Year if his/her behaviour record deteriorates.

Leaving Certificate Programme

The school offers the established Leaving Certificate Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

- Students who wish to continue on to Senior Cycle in either programme will be expected to indicate this to the school by the end of January (subject to change).
- Students will be asked to indicate their preferred choice of programme on an application form by the end of January (subject to change).
- Students will subsequently be asked to indicate their preferred subject choices. Every effort will be made to facilitate the students' choices. However, due to teacher allocation and constraints, it may not be possible to offer all subjects requested by students.
- Students may also partake in the LCVP programme subject to meeting the necessary requirements as set down by the Department of Education and Skills.

Leaving Certificate Applied Programme

There will be one Leaving Certificate Applied Class (subject to numbers).

- All students who wish to apply for LCA will be expected to fill out an application form in January (subject to change) and return the fully completed form to the school.

- Interviews(Group and /or Individual interviews) may then be held to determine the suitability of the students to partake in the programme
- The student's behaviour, work ethic, suitability for the programme and attendance records in the previous three years will be examined and taken into consideration when offering a place to the student.

Students with Additional Needs

The BOM of Dunshaughlin Community College welcomes students with special educational needs. Parents/guardians of students with such needs should contact the school as early as possible in writing in relation to the specific needs involved and, if possible, submit copies of any assessments, reports or other relevant documentation. This information is required by the school so that it can seek additional resources from the National Council for Special Education well in advance of the commencement of the school year. Where necessary, the school will also meet with the parents/guardians concerned to discuss students' needs and the school's capabilities to meet those needs.

In exceptional circumstances, where adequate resources are not forthcoming from the National Council for Special Education or where the provision of these resources is unduly delayed for whatever reason, the school may have to postpone admission until the resource needs are put in place.

"Repeating" a Year in Dunshaughlin Community College.

3. Pupils Wishing to Repeat a Year

Consideration will only be given to pupils wishing to repeat a year in exceptional circumstances and for reasons acceptable to the Department of Education and Science as set out in circular letters M57/87, M33/89, M47/93 and M2/95.

Students of Dunshaughlin Community College who wish to repeat a particular school year must apply in writing to the school Principal. In a memorandum of 23 October '03 the D.E.S. devolved authority to schools to make the final decision in this matter. In making the decision the school is obliged to respect the criteria laid down by the D.E.S. in CL.M2/95, namely that a student wishing to repeat should normally fulfil one of the following conditions (as summarised):

- (a) that he/she had been absent due to illness for a considerable period of time;
- (b) that he/she has experienced significant learning difficulties and as a result has not made satisfactory progress in school;
- (c) that he/she has recently changed domicile;

(d) that he/she has experienced other extenuating circumstances.

The school authorities wish to stress that the over-riding concern in all cases, will be the welfare of the student concerned.

Please note that because of the constraints imposed by option choices and restrictions in class size, it may not always be possible to satisfy an individual student's requirements.

Transferring from Another Second Level School

Transfers

While it is appreciated that in certain exceptional circumstances transfers are unavoidable (e.g. a change of residence or a family moving into the area), as a matter of general policy, transfers into the school during school term are discouraged in the overall interests of the continuity of the student's education, and to reduce disruption to the class group. The school acknowledges the challenges facing families newly migrated into the area from afar and will endeavour in so far as possible, bearing in mind the needs of all students, to facilitate the transfer requests of such students.

An application to transfer is defined as one from a student who has previously enrolled (or is currently enrolled) in another post- primary school in or outside the catchment area or from a student who makes application after the commencement of the autumn school term. **In general, it is the policy of the Board of Management not to accept transfer applications from students enrolled in other local post-primary schools that share the same catchment, or are in adjacent catchments, or from students who have ceased to attend a post-primary school due to exclusion or suspension or encouragement to leave (whether formally or informally conveyed).**

Applications from students wishing to transfer into the school should be accompanied by:

1. A letter setting out clearly the reason(s) for the application and the following documentation should be supplied:
2. Completed Transfer Application Form which must have the following:
 - a. Report of Student's school attendance to date.
 - b. Special Educational Needs information.
 - c. List of optional subjects required.
 - d. In all cases, students will be requested to indicate their levels in Irish, English and Mathematics.
 - e. The completion of a Principal's report form from their current school.
 - f. The two most recent reports from the pupil's previous school.
 - g. A written reference/report from the previous school together with at least one additional written reference, dated within one month of the date of application, from a local Youth Club/Sports Club or similar organisation and/or a member of the Garda Síochána and/or a person of standing in the community.
 - h. Psychological reports or other reports, if relevant.

Results of any assessment tests – e.g. NRIT, CAT 3/4, DATS etc..

The school also reserves the right to request a confidential reference from the authorities in previous school(s) and such other background checks as may be deemed appropriate in order to properly consider the application.

Having due regard and respect for the statutory and constitutional rights of parents and their children, the Board of Management reserves the right to refuse any application in particular circumstances, which might include but are not confined to the following:

- i. An established prior record of poor behaviour and, in particular, any propensity towards violence against other pupils and/or members of staff; or any record of being involved in the use of or of encouraging others to use illegal substances either in school or in public.
- ii. Lack of adequate resources and adequate support personnel to cater for particular needs;
- iii. Insufficient educational attainment to participate in a particular course or year group, e.g. a post-leaving certificate programme.
- iv. Lack of space in a particular programme/year group.

Applications to transfer into the school will be considered having regard to the overall wellbeing of existing pupils, and the availability of a student place in the class or year group, physical space and resources. Where the Board has good grounds for forming the fair and reasonable opinion that it would not be in the best interests of the existing students, of teaching and learning in the school, and/or the applicant, to accept such a transfer, it is the policy of the school to refuse to enrol such applicants.

Applications will not be accepted from students who are the subject of on-going disciplinary proceedings in another school which includes any on-going statutory procedures in accordance with the Education Act 1998 or The Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Exceptional Circumstances

The BOM wishes to state that it reserves the right to refuse an application for admission in exceptional circumstances.

Right of Appeal

The BOM further wishes to advise parents/guardians that in the event of a pupil being refused entry to Dunshaughlin Community College an appeal may be made under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. The appeal is made initially to the Board of Management. In the event that the Board of Management formally refuses entry, a further appeal may be made to Louth

& Meath Education Training Board. If the appeal is not upheld at LMETB level an appeal may then be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. Further information will be made available if requested. (See **appendix 5 for school contact details**)

Monitoring and Review of the Policy.

This policy was revised on 30/09/2003

This policy was revised on 14/12/2009

This policy was revised on 09/09/2010

This policy was revised on 19/11/2012

This policy was revised on

This policy was revised on

This policy was revised on

Appendix 1

Primary Schools located within the catchment area of Dunshaughlin Community College

-  Dunshaughlin National School
-  Scoil na Rithe Dunshaughin
-  Dunsany National School
-  Culmullen National School
-  Kiltale National School
-  Skryne National School
-  Rathbeggan National School
-  Rathregan National School

Appendix 2

Organisations/Groups represented on the Board of Management of Dunshaughlin Community College

LMETB Ms Catherine Clair
Mr Gerry O Connor
Mr John Fanning

Teaching Staff Ms Vera Prendergast
Mr Michael O Keefe

Parents Mrs Barbara Sheehan
Mr Terry Malone

Community Representative Ms. Rosemary Maguire

Appendix 3

Programmes which will be provided in Dunshaughlin Community College in 2015-2016

Junior Certificate.
Transition Year
LCVP
Leaving Certificate

Appendix 4

Maximum number of Classes and Maximum Year Group sizes for 2015

First Year: 6 Class Groups : 156 students for 2015 / 2016 academic year
Second Year: 6 Class Groups : 180 students for 2015 / 2016 academic year
Third Year: 6 Class Groups: 174 students for 2015 / 2016 academic year
Transition Year: 6 Class Groups: 148 students 2015 / 2016 academic year
Leaving Certificate Year 1: 6 Class Groups :180 students for 2015 / 2016 academic year
Leaving Certificate Year 2: 6 Class Groups :170 students for 2015 / 2016 academic year

Appendix 5

School Contact details:

Principal: Mr. Shane Foley

Deputy Principal: Ms Bridget Bennett

Deputy Principal: Ms Cathy Byrne

Address: Dunshaughlin Community College, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath

Phone: 01 8259137

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Website: www.dunshaughlincc.ie