

Saint Mary's National School
Belmont Ave, Donnybrook, Dublin 4
and
Mount Eden Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4
Tel: 01 2195734 Email: office@saintmarys.ie

ADMISSION POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Admission Policy (referred to as the “Admission Policy” or “Policy” throughout) is published pursuant to Section 15 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, and it complies with the requirements of those two Acts and the Equal Status Act 2000. Prior to submitting this Policy for approval by the school’s patron, the Board of Management of St. Mary’s National School has consulted with school staff, the school patron and parents and guardians of children attending the school. The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal Teacher, Ms. Amy Moran, will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this Policy.
- 1.2 This Policy was approved by the school patron on 29 November, 2023. Hard copies of this Policy are available from the school office, and the Policy is available on the school’s website, www.saintmarys.ie.
- 1.3 The school’s Admission Policy is reviewed at least annually by the Board of Management. This Policy governs enrolment for the school year 2024/25 and will continue in force thereafter until replaced. Should any change in legislation require changes to this Policy, the Policy will be changed as soon as is reasonably possible after the new legislation comes into effect.
- 1.4 Decisions in relation to applications for places in the school are made by The Board of Management of St. Mary’s National School in accordance with the Admission Policy applicable at the relevant time. The administration of the school’s Admission Policy has been delegated by the Board of Management to the Principal.
- 1.5 General information about the school is contained in the Appendix to this Policy.
- 1.6 The Board of Management of St. Mary’s National 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.

2. Characteristic spirit and religious instruction

2.1 St. Mary's National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic Ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. "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:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the cognitive, intellectual, physical, social, creative, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects;
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people;
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith.

2.2 The 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.

2.3 The following are the arrangements for students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students.

- (a) A written request should be made to the Principal of the school.
- (b) A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.
- (c) It will not be possible however to provide religious instruction in other faiths or to provide facilities to allow children to engage in the practice of another faith.

2.4 In accordance with section 15(2)(b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Mary's National School 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.

3 Application Process for places at the start of Junior Infants

3.1 The relevant dates and timelines for the St. Mary's National School admission process are set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned. This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Annual Admission Notice for the school year concerned. The application form for admission is published on the school's website, www.saintmarys.ie, and will be made available in hard copy on request to any person who requests it.

- 3.2 Each year prior to 1 October the Board of Management determines the number of places to be made available in Junior Infants in the following year. In deciding on the number of places to be made available in Junior Infants, the Board of Management gives due consideration to all relevant factors, including Department of Education and Skills Guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provision, the number of classrooms available, the size of available space in classrooms, the educational needs of children of a particular age, multi-grade classes and the presence of children with special educational needs or special behavioural characteristics.
- 3.3 On the first Monday in October each year (the Opening Date) the application process opens for places in Junior Infants in the following year. Parents and guardians are welcome to complete enrolment details in writing by submitting the required information on or after the Opening Date and on or before the Closing Date, which is specified in the Annual Admission Notice and is a date that is a minimum of twenty-two days after the Opening Date.
- 3.4 All valid applications for enrolment in Junior Infants in the following year are considered. An application is valid only if all of the required information has been received by the school on or after the Opening Date and on or before the Closing Date.

The required information comprises:

- an Application Form, fully completed,
 - a copy of the birth or adoption certificate of the child for whom a place is being sought, and
 - one invoice from a provider of a fixed utility (i.e. for electricity, gas, fixed broadband or cable/satellite TV), dated within 3 months before the Closing Date, evidencing the address of the residence of the child for whom a place is being sought.
- 3.5 Parents/guardians are required to provide the school with all relevant information and to inform the school of any change of address, contact details or other information relevant to their application.
- 3.6 Applications for admission received after the Closing Date as outlined in the Annual Admission Notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with the School's Admission Policy, the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.
- 3.7 Late applicants will be offered a place in the event that a place is available and no names appear or remain on the waiting list for places. In the event that no place is available the names of late applicants will be added to the relevant waiting list in the order of the date of receipt of their applications.
- 3.8 Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application not later than three weeks after the date on which the school receives the application.

4 Admission of Students

4.1 St. Mary's National School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds.

- (a) The gender ground of the student, or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (b) The civil status ground of the student, or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (c) The family status ground of the student, or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (d) The sexual orientation ground of the student, or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (e) The religion ground of the student, or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (f) The disability ground of the student, or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (g) The ground of race of the student, or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (h) The Traveller community ground of the student, or of the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (i) The ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs.

4.2 As required by section 61(3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', '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.

4.3 St. Mary's National School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values. The school does not 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.

4.4 Our school is fully committed to inclusivity, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with special educational needs. Children with special educational needs are welcome in the school and every effort is made to provide them with an appropriate education as well as to include them in every aspect of school life. At the request of the Department of Education, St. Mary's National School plans to open an Autism Special Class in our campus on Mount Eden Road. This class can accommodate up to six students aged from Second class to Sixth Class. The Board of Management is in the process of securing the resources necessary to open this class in January 2024. Please see Section 8 below for application process for the Autism Special Class.

4.5 Subject to paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 below, the school will offer a place to each student seeking admission, except where:

- a) the number of places available is less than the number of applications for those places (see Section 6 below), or
- b) a parent/guardian of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to do so, 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.

4.6 No applicant will be allocated a place in Junior Infants unless that applicant will reach the age of four on or before 1st April of the year of proposed entry to the school (the “Age Requirement”).

4.7 The school may decline to offer a place to an applicant if it is established that information in that applicant’s application is false or misleading.

5 Decisions on the allocation of places in Junior Infants

5.1 Shortly after the Closing Date in each year, the Board of Management makes decisions on the allocation of places in Junior Infants for the following year and parents/guardians are then informed of the Board’s decisions.

5.2 All decisions on applications for admission to St. Mary’s National School are based on:

- The School’s Admission Policy
- The School’s Annual Admission Notice
- The information provided by the applicant in the School’s official Application Form received during the period specified in the Annual Admission Notice for receiving applications.

Selection criteria that are not included in the School’s Admission Policy are not used to make a decision on an application for a place in the School.

5.3 In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act 1998 (as inserted by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018), the School will not consider or take into account any of the following factors in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school, namely:

- (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) a student’s academic ability, skills or aptitude,
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitudes 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,
- (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 students who are siblings (including half-siblings, and also including step-siblings and foster siblings resident at the same address) of current or former pupils of the School, or
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the School's Annual Admission Notice for the school year concerned.

6 Oversubscription for Junior Infants

6.1 In the event that the number of valid applications for places in Junior Infants exceeds the number of places available, and subject to the other relevant provisions of this Admission Policy, places are allocated by the Board of Management, to children who satisfy the Age Requirement, by reference to the priority categories set out below, in the order in which those categories appear below, until the number of places allocated is equal to the number of places available as determined by the Board of Management. Within each of the priority categories, the order of priority is determined by the date of birth of each child, with priority to the oldest. In the unlikely event of a tie between applicants their relative priority is determined by a process of random selection supervised by an independent party.

- (1) Children who are siblings (including half-siblings, and also including step-siblings and foster siblings resident at the same address) of current or former pupils of St. Mary's National School, and children who qualify as resident within the Catholic Parish of the Sacred Heart, Donnybrook, Dublin 4 (referred to in this document as "the Parish") for the purposes of this Admission Policy (see paragraphs 6.3 to 6.5 below as to the determination of residence).
- (2) Children who are not included within the preceding category and who are children of current staff employed by the school.
- (3) Children who qualify as resident in one of the following neighbouring parishes: the parish of the Holy Name, Beechwood Avenue, the parish of St. Columbanus, St. Gall and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Milltown or the parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Merrion Road (see paragraphs 6.3 to 6.6 below as to the determination of residence).
- (4) All other applicants who satisfy the Age Requirement.

6.2 Where the Board has allocated a place in Junior Infants on the basis that an applicant is in one of the priority categories referred to in paragraph 6.1 above, the Board reserves the right to withdraw the place from that applicant at any time prior to the commencement of

the relevant Junior Infant class in the school in the event that the Board determines that the applicant does not in fact qualify for that priority category.

- 6.3 St. Mary's National School seeks as far as possible to accommodate children who reside in the Parish and does so by affording a priority to applicants based on where they live. In order to prioritise children who will be living in the Parish when attending the school, the Board of Management tries to satisfy itself as far as reasonably possible that each applicant who is given this priority is resident in the Parish at the Closing Date, and that the applicant's parents/guardians intend that the applicant will remain resident in the Parish up to and after starting in Junior Infants.
- 6.4 In order to ensure as far as possible that this objective is achieved, the Board of Management will not regard the residence requirement as satisfied unless the parents/guardians of the applicant have provided evidence, as required by the Board of Management, of residence in the Parish as at the Closing Date, and have confirmed in writing their intention to continue to reside in the Parish up to and after the applicant starts in Junior Infants. The Board of Management reserves the right to take such reasonable steps as it deems necessary to verify as far as possible the residence of an applicant. These steps may include visits to the address at which the applicant is stated to reside.
- 6.5 The Board of Management reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place that has been allocated on the basis of residence in the Parish at any time prior to the applicant starting in the Junior Infant class in the school if the Board is not satisfied that:
- (i) all relevant information provided to the school in connection with the applicant's application is true and accurate, and none of it is false or misleading;
 - (ii) no relevant information has been withheld from the school;
 - (iii) the applicant was resident in the Parish as at the Closing Date;
 - (iv) the applicant has continued to reside in the Parish since that date; and
 - (v) the applicant's parents/guardians intend that the applicant will continue to reside in the Parish after starting in Junior Infants.
- 6.6 The Board of Management adopts a similar approach, and the same rules apply, in respect of applicants who wish to avail of the priority afforded to residents of other specified parishes.
- 6.7 The name of each applicant who has submitted a valid application for Junior Infants and who is not allocated a place is placed on a waiting list in the order determined by the policy set out above, and any additional places that become available during the remainder of the school year prior to the commencement of the Junior Infant class (e.g. where an offer of a place is not taken up) are allocated from that waiting list in the order in which the applicants appear on the waiting list. This waiting list also serves as the waiting list for any place that may become available in Junior Infants during the school year following the commencement of the Junior Infant class, and any such places are allocated in the order in which applicants appear on the waiting list.

7 Offers and acceptances of places in Junior Infants

- 7.1 The Principal will communicate the Board's decisions on applications for enrolment in Junior Infants in writing to the address given in the Application Form within the timeline outlined in the Annual Admission Notice.
- 7.2 Where the Board allocates a place to an applicant on foot of a priority afforded to children on the basis of residence, the parents/guardians of that applicant will be asked to furnish the school with further proof of residence, and the allocation of the place is conditional on the Board of Management being satisfied that the applicant complies with the residence requirement described in this Admission Policy. The required proof of residence includes two further invoices, each covering a period that includes the Closing Date, from the providers of fixed utilities (i.e. for electricity, gas, fixed broadband or cable/satellite TV) to the address at which the applicant is stated to reside.
- 7.3 If an applicant is not offered a place in the school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the applicant's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the applicant's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned. Applicants may request the Board of Management to review a decision to refuse admission. Applicants will be informed of the right of appeal of the school's decision (See Section 9 below).
- 7.4 In order to secure a place in Junior Infants, an offer of a place must be accepted in writing on or before the date specified in the Annual Admission Notice. If the offer is not accepted in writing on or before that date the offer will be deemed to have been withdrawn and the place will be offered to the next applicant on the waiting list.
- 7.5 In accepting an offer of admission from St. Mary's National School, the applicant must indicate:
 - (a) whether or not the applicant has accepted an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, the applicant must also provide details of the other school or schools concerned, and
 - (b) whether or not the applicant has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, the applicant must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

In the event that an applicant fails to comply with these requirements when accepting an offer of admission, the offer may be withdrawn.

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education Act 1998, as inserted by the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

7.6 An offer of a place may also be withdrawn by the School if:

- (a) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading, or
- (b) the parent or guardian of an applicant, 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 applicant.

7.7 Parents/guardians who do not wish to take up the offer of a place are asked to inform the school in writing of this decision as soon as possible in order to facilitate other applicants.

Applications for places in Saint Mary's National School Autism Special Class

8.1 Saint Mary's National School is currently establishing an Autism Special Class with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which will provide an education exclusively for pupils with Autism. The class is for children from Second Class to Sixth Class only and can accommodate up to six students. The Board of Management is in the process of securing resources necessary to open this class in January 2024.

8.2 Applications for the Autism Special Class can be made from the date of approval of this amended policy by the Patron.

8.3 An application is valid only if all of the required information has been received by the school.

The required information comprises:

- an Autism Special Class Enrolment Application Form, fully completed, (available to download on school website www.saintmarys.ie),
- a copy of the birth or adoption certificate of the child for whom a place is being sought,
- satisfactory evidence of a diagnosis of Autism in line with DSM-V/ ICD-10/11,
- a recent (within the last two years) psychological assessment or a report from a member of a multi-disciplinary team referring to the child for whom a place is being sought with a recommendation for placement in an Autism Special Class in a mainstream primary school,
- one invoice from a provider of a fixed utility (i.e. for electricity, gas, fixed broadband or cable/satellite TV), dated within 3 months of the application date, evidencing the address of the residence of the child for whom a place is being sought.

8.4 Parents/guardians are required to provide the school with all relevant information and to inform the school of any change of address, contact details or other information relevant to their application.

8.5 The receipt of the application will be acknowledged via email. An application to enroll in the Autism Special Class will be processed at the earliest opportunity and a response to the application will be issued within 28 days of receipt of the application. However, applications made during the school holidays will not be processed until the school re-opens.

- 8.6 Until the Autism Special Class has reached capacity, the school will offer a place to each child for whom a valid application to the class has been received, except where:
- (a) the child is not at an age suitable for entry into Second to Sixth Class, or
 - (b) a parent/guardian of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education Welfare Act 2000 to do so, 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. Accommodations may be made to expectations of student behaviour through Individual Educational Plan meetings.
- 8.7 When the Autism Special Class is at capacity a waiting list of applicants for whom a valid application for the Autism Special Class has been received will be compiled. Applicants on the waiting list who are at an age suitable for entry to Second to Sixth class will be placed in order, giving priority to students who are currently enrolled in Saint Mary's National School and thereafter using the same order of priority as is set out in Section 6.1 above.
- 8.8 An offer of a place may be declined or withdrawn if it is established that information contained in the Autism Special Class Enrolment Application Form is false or misleading.
- 8.9 Parents/guardians who do not wish to take up a place are asked to inform the school in writing of this decision as soon as possible in order to facilitate other applicants.
- 8.10 An Acceptance Form, as issued by the school, must be returned to the school within the required period of time.

9. Applications for places other than at the start of Junior Infants and other than the Autism Special Class

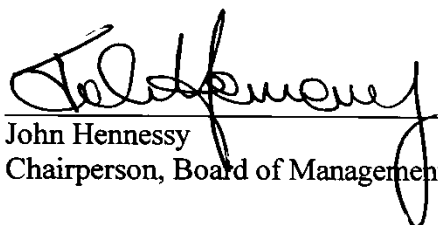
- 9.1 Occasionally the Board of Management makes available a place in the school other than at the start of Junior Infants and other than the Autism Special Class. Such places can arise when a pupil leaves an existing class; however, the Board of Management reserves the right to decline to make available a place when any pupil leaves the school. In deciding whether to make a place available other than at the start of Junior Infants the Board of Management considers all relevant factors, including those referred to in this Admission Policy.
- 9.2 To facilitate the allocation of such places the school operates a waiting list for each class. An applicant wishing to join any class other than Junior Infants (Pupil Transfer), whether at the start of an academic year or at any time during that academic year, must apply to the school between 6 January and 30 April (the Application Period) in the calendar year in which that academic year begins. The Pupil Transfer Form is available on the school's website and in hard copy from the school. For an application to be valid the Pupil Transfer Form must be completed in full and received by the school within the Application Period.
- 9.3 The waiting list for each class closes for applications on 30 April and is used to allocate any

place that the Board of Management decides to make available in that class for the next academic year. All waiting lists cease to operate on 31 August of the year of application. Accordingly, a fresh application is needed each year, between 6 January and 30 April, for any applicant who wishes to remain on the waiting list to join a year group as it progresses through the school.

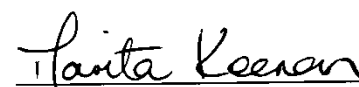
- 9.4 Where a valid application is received between 6 January and 30 April for a place in a class other than Junior Infants the name of the applicant is placed on the waiting list, provided the applicant's age is, in the view of the Board of Management, appropriate for the year group in question. In the event that the Board of Management decides to make a place available in a class, the names that are on the waiting list for that class at the time of the Board's decision are placed in order using the same order of priority as is set out in Section 6 above. For the purpose of determining whether an applicant qualifies for the priority afforded to residents of the Parish or other specified parishes, the term "Closing Date" as used for the allocation of places in Junior Infants is replaced by the term "Specified Date", which is a date specified by the Board of Management when it decides to make the relevant place available. The available place is then offered to the applicant at the top of the waiting list. In the event that an applicant declines the offer of a place the name of that applicant is removed from the waiting list and the place is offered to the next applicant on the waiting list.
- 9.5 In the event that there are no names on a waiting list, the Board may offer a place to an applicant whose otherwise valid application was received outside the application period relevant to that place, and, in the event that the number of such applications exceeds one, the same order of priority is used as applies to applications received within the relevant application period.
- 9.6 An offer of a place may be withdrawn if it is established that information contained in the Pupil Transfer Form is false or misleading.
- 9.7 Parents/guardians are asked to inform the school in writing if and when they are no longer interested in a place for a child whose name is on the waiting list for a class.

10. Right of Appeal

- 10.1 Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of a student may appeal a decision of the school to refuse admission.
- 10.2 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.
- 10.3 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 the Education Act 1998, which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.



John Hennessy
Chairperson, Board of Management



Marita Keenan
Acting Principal,
Secretary Board of Management

APPENDIX

GENERAL INFORMATION

This appendix contains general information about St Mary's National School for the benefit of current and prospective parents and guardians of pupils of the School. It does not form part of the School's Admission Policy.

The catchment area of the school is the Catholic Parish of the Sacred Heart, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

For the school year 2023/24 St Mary's National School will have the Principal, Administrative Deputy Principal and 30 teachers, comprising 25 mainstream class teachers, and 5 Special Education teachers. There are also 2.83 Special Needs Assistants employed in the school.

The school operates from two locations; one located on Belmont Avenue, Donnybrook and one located on Mount Eden Road, Donnybrook. The premises at Belmont Avenue opens to receive pupils at 8:50 a.m., and school ends each day at 1.30 p.m. for Junior Infants and Senior Infants and at 2.30 p.m. for First Class. The premises on Mt Eden Road opens each day to receive pupils at 8.40 a.m., and school finishes for the day at 2.20 p.m.

St. Mary's National School operates under the Rules for National Schools and Departmental Circulars and is subject to the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004, the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 and all relevant equality legislation.

The School is funded by grants and teachers' remuneration provided by the Department of Education and Skills. In addition, parents and guardians are invited to support voluntary fundraising each year to supplement the capitation grant received from the Department of Education and Skills. These contributions are entirely and strictly voluntary and non-obligatory.

St. Mary's National School follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Skills. The school also follows the Religious programme prescribed by the Education Secretariat of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin.

The Principal will, in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, as a condition of registering a student in the school, require the parent or parents of that student to confirm in writing that the school's Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code by the student. Children enrolled in St. Mary's National School are required to co-operate with and support the school/Board of Management's Code of Behaviour as well as other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. The Board of Management regards parents/guardians as responsible for ensuring that their children co-operate with those policies in an appropriate way.

The Board of Management reserves the right to operate a policy of suspension or expulsion in accordance with the National Educational Welfare Board.