



# **Abbey Vocational School**

## **The Glebe, Donegal Town, Co Donegal**

### **POLICY FOR ADMISSION TO SCHOOL YEAR 2021/2022**

#### **Abbey Vocational Post-Primary School**

A decision on an application for admission will be based on the implementation of this Policy, the information set out in the annual Admission Notice of the school and the information provided by the Applicant in the application for admission, once received before the closing date set out in the annual Admission Notice. The Principal of the Abbey Vocational School is responsible for the implementation of this Admission Policy.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ABBEY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

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The Abbey Vocational School was established in 1982. It was named after the historic ‘Old Abbey’ where the *Annals of the Four Masters* was compiled, over four hundred years ago, by four scribes often referred to as ‘The Four Masters’. The modern school with its extensive playing fields and gymnasium is located at The Glebe, overlooking the historic ruin of the Franciscan settlement.

Ours is a co-educational school, the largest of the 15 schools under the trusteeship of Donegal Education and Training Board. The school is the only second-level education provider in the area and caters for the diverse range of needs of local students. It is a non-denominational co-educational school catering for around 950 students drawn from a catchment area at the northern tip of Donegal Bay.

### **Mission Statement**

Abbey Vocational School is dedicated to the holistic development of students in a caring environment where tolerance and respect are nurtured and valued. Our educational aims combine academic excellence with a varied extra-curricular programme. We encourage students to do their best in whatever they do, both in and out of the classroom. Our dedicated teaching staff demonstrate remarkable care of our students. Their commitment ensures that all our students achieve to the best of their ability.

### **Positive Culture**

The Abbey Vocational School is a safe, caring, and inclusive environment where students are valued and encouraged in all of their pursuits. We accept, understand, and attend to student differences and diversity which can include the physical, cognitive, academic, social, and emotional. The driving principle is to make all students feel welcomed, appropriately challenged, and supported in their efforts.

### **Good Relationships**

We believe that good relationships need to be at the heart of everything in school if effective teaching and learning are to take place. We are a restorative school. We enjoy a friendly and positive atmosphere in the school as well as mutually beneficial relations with all our partners and neighbours in the community. Our success is firmly rooted in

the excellent relationship which exists between students and teachers and we are especially proud of the atmosphere of trust, support and mutual respect which is evident.

### **Broad Curriculum and Programmes**

We are proud of the very broad programmes and the curriculum available in our school as well as our excellent academic results and our exceptional array of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. We believe in the education of the whole child. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum so that all our students have the opportunity to succeed at the highest level of their own individual talents, aptitudes and abilities.

We have high expectations of our students and they achieve high levels of success in the State Examinations .

### **Partnership with Parents and Students**

We strongly encourage students and parents to become involved in the social, cultural, spiritual, intellectual and sporting life of the school. We actively work with our valued Parents Association and Students Council in this regard. We place a high value on our cooperation with parents. It is only in partnership with them that we may together ensure our students will realise their full potential in all aspects of their lives.

### **Commitment to the Individual**

We believe that our students are successful because they are part of a school where every individual is valued and supported and is offered every opportunity to succeed. This makes our school a happy place to learn. Our students thrive, knowing that they are supported in every aspect of their life by dedicated staff who encourage them to fulfil their potential. We regard the opportunity to educate our students as an absolute privilege.

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# **PART A**

## **General Information for All Applicants**

- 1. Glossary of terms**
- 2. Admission Statement**
- 3. Legal Framework**
- 4. General Admission Provisions (for all Applicants)**

## 1 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**‘Applicant’** means the parent / guardian of a Student, or, in the case of a Student who has reached the age of 18 years, the Student, who has made an application for admission to the Abbey Vocational School.

**‘Student’** means the person in respect of whom the application is being made. All uses of the word throughout this Policy therefore imply ‘prospective’ as part of the interpretation. That is, the use of the word ‘Student’ does not mean that the application for him/her has been accepted such that s/he is regarded as a Student of the Abbey Vocational School by virtue of application alone.

**‘Gender’**, in line with the definition of “*the gender ground*” in the Equal Status Act 2000, is such that “*one is male and the other is female*”. This does not prejudice any Student who is Intersex or identifies as Androgynous/Androgyne, Bigender, Demigender, Gender Fluid, Genderqueer, Multigender, Neutrois, Non-binary, Transgender, Transsexual or otherwise.

**‘Catchment Area’** refers to the designated residential area for application to all classes other than the Special Classes in the Abbey Vocational School in respect of the person on whose behalf the application is being made. The catchment area for the Abbey Vocational School is defined as being the closest school to a student’s home or/ and where a student attends one of our feeder schools below:

Our Feeder Schools are :

- St Ernan’s Primary School, Ballintra
- Robertson Primary School, Ballintra
- St Eunan’s NS, Laghey
- Glebe Primary School, Donegal Town
- Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala, Donegal Town
- Gaelscoil Na Ceithre Maistri, Donegal Town
- Scoil An Linbh Iosa, Killymard
- St Francis National School, Barnesmore
- St Peter’s Primary School, Mountcharles
- Frosses Primary School
- Killian Primary School

- Inver National School
- St Naul's Primary School, Keelogs
- Dunkineely Primary School
- St Mary's Primary School, Pettigo
- Killaghtee Primary School, Dunkineely

**'Catchment Area for the Special Classes'** refers to the designated residential area for application to the Special Class(es) within the Abbey Vocational School in respect of the person on whose behalf the application is being made. The catchment area for the Abbey Vocational School is defined as being the closest school to a student's home or/ and where a student attends one of our feeder schools below:

Our Feeder Schools are :

- St Ernan's Primary School, Ballintra
- Robertson Primary School, Ballintra
- St Eunan's NS, Laghey
- Glebe Primary School, Donegal Town
- Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala, Donegal Town
- Gaelscoil Na Ceithre Maistri, Donegal Town
- Scoil An Linbh Iosa, Killymard
- St Francis National School, Barnesmore
- St Peter's Primary School, Mountcharles
- Frosses Primary School
- Killian Primary School
- Inver National School
- St Naul's Primary School, Keelogs
- Dunkineely Primary School
- St Mary's Primary School, Pettigo
- Killaghtee Primary School, Dunkineely

**'Parent'** has the same meaning as in the Education Act 1998 and includes a foster parent and a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997.

**'Special Class'** means a class that has, with the approval of the Minister of Education and Skills, been established by a school to provide an education exclusively for Students with a

category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister of Education and Skills. The Abbey Vocational School has two Special Classes, established to cater for special educational needs of students with 1. Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders, and 2. Moderate General Learning Disability.

**‘First-Year’** means the intake group of Students for the most junior class or year in a school.



## 2 ADMISSION STATEMENT

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ETB schools are state, co-educational, multidenominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education;
- Care;
- Equality;
- Community and
- Respect.



As the state provider of education, the ETB sector defines a ‘multidenominational’ school in the following way:

In ETB schools, all students are given equal opportunities for enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. Once enrolled, our schools strive to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life all members of our school communities are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.

Our schools provide a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. They strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

In ETB schools, students of all religions and beliefs are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and beliefs.

Accordingly, The Abbey Vocational School shall not discriminate in its admission of a Student based on the following grounds:

- 2.1.** Gender of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.2.** Civil status of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.3.** Family status of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.4.** Sexual orientation of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.5.** Religion of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.6.** Disability of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.7.** Race of the Student or Applicant;
- 2.8.** The Student's or Applicant's membership of the Traveller community;
- 2.9.** Special educational needs of the Student or Applicant. However, where the school provides education exclusively for a category or categories of special educational need(s) in a Special Class, it is not discriminatory to refuse to admit to that class a Student who does not have the specified special educational need(s).

The Abbey Vocational School shall not charge fees or payments or seek contributions as a condition of admission or continued enrolment of a Student.

### 3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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Donegal ETB was established under the Education and Training Board Act 2013 which sets out the functions of all ETBs, including to establish and maintain recognised schools, centres for education and education and training facilities in each ETB's functional area.

The board of management of the Abbey Vocational School is a committee established under section 44 of the Education and Training Board Act 2013 and also constitutes a board of management within the meaning of the Education Act 1998.

The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 place a duty on all recognised schools to prepare and publish an Admission Policy.

The Education Act, 1998 provides for an appeal process in the event of a refusal to enrol. The appeal process is set out in section 5.3 in respect of applications made to the First-Year Group and in section 6.3 in respect of applications made to all years other than the First-Year Group.

Section 62(7)(n) of the Education Act 1998 requires each school to set out in its Admission Policy the arrangements it has in place where a parent, or student over 18 years of age, requests that the student opt-out of religious instruction.

It is important to understand that our school does not provide '*religious instruction*' and therefore the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise in this school. It is also important to understand the distinction between '*religious instruction*' and '*religious education*':

- *Religious instruction* is a term used in Ireland to indicate instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a **particular** religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition. Religious instruction may be provided in a denominational school setting.
- *Religious education* is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.

As ETB schools are ‘multi-denominational’, the Abbey Vocational School supports the provision of *religious education* that caters for all students regardless of their religious or non-religious beliefs and therefore does not provide *religious instruction* of any particular religion or belief.

The Abbey Vocational School offers *religious education* in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their well-being in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, *religious education* supports the ‘multi-denominational’ aspect of our school’s ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

## 4 GENERAL ADMISSION PROVISIONS

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A decision on an application for admission shall be based on:

- the implementation of this Admission Policy,
- the annual Admission Notice of the school, and the
- information provided by the Applicant in the application for admission.

If, prior to the commencement of section 62 of the Education Act 1998 by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020, the Abbey Vocational School had confirmed, in writing, that an Applicant had been placed on a list relating to the allocation of school places for entrance before the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025, then this confirmation is still valid and the Applicant will be offered that place.

In processing an application the Abbey Vocational School **shall not consider:**

- 4.1** The payment of fees or contributions to the school;
- 4.2** A Student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; unless it is necessary to ascertain whether or not the Student has the category of special educational needs concerned for admission to a school approved by the Minister of Education and Skills providing education exclusively to Students with a specified category of special educational needs or a special class;
- 4.3** The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a Student's parent(s);
- 4.4** A requirement that a Student or his or her Parent(s), attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- 4.5** A Student's connection to the school due to a member of his or her family or having previously attended the Abbey Vocational School.

**4.6** The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school as long as it is received during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual Admission Notice for that academic year.

The Abbey Vocational School **will consider** the offer of a place to every Student seeking admission to the school, **unless any of the following applies:**

**4.7** The Parent fails to confirm in writing that s/he accepts the Student Code of Behaviour and he/she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the Student;

**4.8** The Student seeking admission to a Special Class in the school does not have the category of special educational needs specified by the Minister of Education and Skills in respect of that class.

Where the Abbey Vocational School considers an application, each Student shall receive a place, unless the school is oversubscribed, in which case, selection criteria will be applied to each application.

Section 5 of this Policy addresses the selection criteria and other matters related to the admission provisions for the First-Year Group.

Section 6 of this Policy addresses the selection criteria and other matters related to the admission provisions for all year groups other than First-Year.

Section 7 of this Policy addresses the selection criteria and other matters related to the admission provisions for the Special Classes.

# **PART B**

## **Information for Specific Categories of Applicants**

- 5. Application to the First-Year Group**
- 6. Application to All Year Groups Other Than First-Year**
- 7. Application to the Special Classes**

# SECTION 5

## APPLICATION TO THE FIRST-YEAR GROUP

### **5 APPLICATION TO THE FIRST-YEAR GROUP**

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#### **5.1 Admission Provisions (First-Year Group)**

- 5.1.1.** Oversubscription
- 5.1.2.** Selection criteria in order of priority
- 5.1.3.** Selection process
- 5.1.4.** Late Applications
- 5.1.5.** Second/third-round offers of a place
- 5.1.6.** Acceptance of a place
- 5.1.7.** Refusal
- 5.1.8.** Withdrawal of an offer
- 5.1.9.** Appeals

#### **5.2 Appeals**

- 5.2.1.** Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription
  - 5.2.2.** Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription
  - 5.2.3.** Basis for appeal



## **5.1 Admission Provisions (First Year Group)**

Where the Abbey Vocational School is not oversubscribed, all Students will be offered a school place, subject to sections 4.7, and 4.8.

A Student applying for the First Year Group but seeking admission to the Special Class should see section 7 of this Admission Policy.

### **5.1.1 Oversubscription**

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 5.1.2 below will apply and a waiting list shall be compiled which shall remain valid only for the school year in respect of which the applications are made. Where the Abbey Vocational School is in a position to offer further school places that become available for and during that academic year, places will be offered in accordance with the order of priority in which Students have been placed on the waiting list.

For the avoidance of doubt, if a Student does not receive a place in the school for a given academic year, but s/he wishes to be considered for admission to the same year group in the following academic year, a new application must be made on behalf of that Student during the dates specified by the school as being the period when it will accept applications to all year groups other than First-Year.

Where the school is oversubscribed, any selection criteria that are not included in this Admission Policy shall not be considered in determining whether or not a Student is admitted to the school.

### **5.1.2 Selection criteria in order of priority**

The Abbey Vocational School will apply the following criteria for admission to the First-Year Group:

- 5.1.2.1** If the Student resides in the Catchment Area;
- 5.1.2.2** If the Student has siblings currently enrolled in the school

**5.1.2.3** If the Student has siblings who were previously enrolled in the school;

See section 7 for selection criteria applicable to admission to the Special Class.

### **5.1.3 Selection process**

The Abbey Vocational School will apply the selection process as follows:

Applications are considered against the published selection criteria. Places will be offered in the first instance to those who meet the first criterion. Subsequently, where the school still has places available, the remaining Applicants are considered in light of the second criterion and those Applicants who meet this criterion will be offered a place within the school. This process is continuously carried out until all available places have been offered and accepted.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, the Abbey Vocational School will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

### **5.1.4 Late applications**

An application received by the Abbey Vocational School after the closing date published by the school, and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Where the Abbey Vocational School is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, that application will receive a place on the waiting list beneath Applicants whose applications were received by the school before the closing date for applications. Such late applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the school and subsequently the school's selection criteria will be applied in accordance with this Admission Policy.

Where the Abbey Vocational School is not oversubscribed and it receives a late application, the Student seeking admission will receive an offer of a place within the school, subject to sections 4.7, and 4.8, and the same process as applies to Applicants whose applications

were received before the closing date will be applied *i.e.* an Acceptance Form will be issued to the Applicant for completion and return to the school within 2 weeks of issue.

#### **5.1.5 Second/third-round offers of a place**

Where a Student is in receipt of an offer of a place within the Abbey Vocational School but does not accept the offer, or the school withdraws the offer in line with the relevant provisions of this Policy, the place will be offered to the next Student on the waiting list in a second-round of offers. This process will continue throughout third and fourth rounds *etc.* until all places within the school have been filled.

#### **5.1.6 Acceptance of a place**

If the Student in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the school.

The Applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the School's Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school.

Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school by the date set out in the School's Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for withdrawal of an offer, as set out below.

#### **5.1.7 Refusal**

Where a Student in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 5.1.7.1.** The reasons that the Student was not offered a place in the Abbey Vocational School;

- 5.1.7.2.** Details of the Student's ranking against the published selection criteria, if the year-group to which the Applicant is applying is oversubscribed;
- 5.1.7.3.** Details of the Student's place on the waiting list, if applicable; and
- 5.1.7.4.** Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision.

In addition to the conditions for consideration of an application as set out at 4.7 and 4.8, an offer of admission may not be made where:

- 5.1.7.5.** The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect.

### **5.1.8 Withdrawal of an offer**

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- 5.1.8.1.** The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect, or
- 5.1.8.2.** The 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 for the academic year for which s/he is applying, or in the case of a late application, or second/third-round offer, within 2 weeks, or
- 5.1.8.3.** An Applicant has not indicated:
  - (i) whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s);and
  - (ii) whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).

If an offer of a place is withdrawn by the school, the Student on whose behalf the application was made shall lose his/her place on the admission list or waiting list for that academic year and any subsequent applications for the same academic year on behalf of that Student shall be treated as a late application in line with section 5.1.4 above.

### **5.1.9 Appeals**

For information relating to an Applicant's right to appeal a decision of the Abbey Vocational School regarding admission to the First-Year Group, see section 5.2.

## **5.2 Appeals**

### **5.2.1 Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission because the school is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision must submit his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of the Abbey Vocational School at The Glebe, Donegal Town Co Donegal, email: [abbeyvs@donegalvec.ie](mailto:abbeyvs@donegalvec.ie). Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

If an Applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, or the board of management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the Applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **5.2.2. Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission to the Abbey Vocational School for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may choose to put his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of the Abbey Vocational School. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this policy, same shall apply instead.

Alternatively, s/he may choose to apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

If an Applicant who chooses to appeal to the board of management is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, the Applicant may also apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **5.2.3 Basis for appeal:**

As required by section 29C(2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admission Policy, the content of the school's Admission Notice and also set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.

# **SECTION 6**

## **APPLICATION TO ALL YEAR GROUPS OTHER THAN FIRST-YEAR**

### **APPLICATION TO ALL YEAR GROUPS OTHER THAN FIRST-YEAR**

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#### **6.1 Admission Provisions (other than First-Year)**

- 6.1.1.** Oversubscription
- 6.1.2.** Selection criteria in order of priority
- 6.1.3.** Selection process
- 6.1.4.** Late Applications
- 6.1.5.** Second/third-round offers of a place
- 6.1.6.** Acceptance of a place
- 6.1.7.** Refusal
- 6.1.8.** Withdrawal of an offer
- 6.1.9.** Appeals

#### **6.2 Appeals**

- 6.2.1.** Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription
- 6.2.2.** Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription
- 6.2.3.** Basis for appeal

## **6.1 ADMISSION PROVISIONS (OTHER THAN FIRST-YEAR)**

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Where the Abbey Vocational School is not oversubscribed, all Students will be offered a school place, subject to sections 4.7, and 4.8.

A Student applying for admission to a year-group other than First-Year but seeking admission to the Special Class should see section 7 of this Admission Policy.

### **6.1.1 Oversubscription**

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 6.1.2 below will apply and a waiting list shall be compiled which shall remain valid only for the school year in respect of which the applications are made. Where the Abbey Vocational School is in a position to offer further school places that become available for and during that academic year, places will be offered in accordance with the order of priority in which Students have been placed on the waiting list.

For the avoidance of doubt, if a Student does not receive a place in the school for a given academic year, but s/he wishes to be considered for admission to the same year group in the following academic year, a new application must be made on behalf of that Student during the dates specified by the school as being the period when it will accept applications to all years other than the First Year Group.

Where the school is oversubscribed, any selection criteria that are not included in this Admission Policy shall not be considered in determining whether or not a Student is admitted to the school.

### **6.1.2 Selection criteria in order of priority**

The Abbey Vocational School will apply the following criteria for admission to a year-group other than First-Year:

- 6.1.2.1** If the Student resides in the catchment area;
- 6.1.2.2** If the Student has siblings currently enrolled in the school;
- 6.1.2.3** If the Student has siblings who were previously enrolled in the school;



See section 7 for selection criteria applicable to admission to the Special Class(es). Any selection criteria that are not included in this Admission Policy shall not be considered in determining whether or not an Applicant is admitted.

### **6.1.3 Selection process**

The Abbey Vocational School will apply the selection process as follows:

Applications are considered against the published selection criteria. Places will be offered in the first instance to those who meet the first criterion. Subsequently, where the school still has places available, the remaining Applicants are considered in light of the second criterion and those Applicants who meet this criterion will be offered a place within the school. This process is continuously carried out until all available places have been offered and accepted.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, the Abbey Vocational School will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

### **6.1.4 Late applications**

An application received by the Abbey Vocational School after the closing date published by the Abbey Vocational School and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Where the Abbey Vocational School is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, that application will receive a place on the waiting list beneath Applicants whose applications were received by the school before the closing date for applications. Such late applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the school and subsequently the school's selection criteria will be applied in accordance with this Admission Policy.

Where the Abbey Vocational School is not oversubscribed and it receives a late application, the Student seeking admission will receive an offer of a place within the Abbey Vocational School subject to sections 4.7 and 4.8, and the same process as applies to Applicants whose applications were received before the closing date will be applied *i.e.* an Acceptance Form

will be issued to the Applicant for completion and return to the school within 2 weeks of issue.

#### **6.1.5 Second/third-round offers of a place**

Where a Student is in receipt of an offer of a place within the Abbey Vocational School but does not accept the offer, or the school withdraws the offer in line with the relevant provisions of this Policy, the place will be offered to the next Student on the waiting list in a second-round of offers. This process will continue throughout third and fourth rounds *etc.* until all places within the school have been filled.

#### **6.1.6 Acceptance of a place**

If the Student in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the school.

The Applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school.

Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for withdrawal of an offer, as set out below.

#### **6.1.7 Refusal**

Where a Student in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 6.1.7.1.** The reasons that the Student was not offered a place in the Abbey Vocational School
- 6.1.7.2.** Details of the Student's ranking against the published selection criteria, if the year-group to which the Applicant is applying is oversubscribed,
- 6.1.7.3.** Details of the Student's place on the waiting list, if applicable, and

**6.1.7.4.** Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision.

In addition to the conditions for consideration of an application as set out at 4.7 and 4.8, an offer of admission may not be made where:

**6.1.7.5.** The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material report.

### **6.1.8 Withdrawal of an offer**

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

**6.1.8.1.** The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect, or

**6.1.8.2.** The 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 for the academic year for which s/he is applying, or in the case of a late application, or second/third-round offer, within 2 weeks, or

**6.1.8.3.** An Applicant has not indicated:

(i) whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s);

and

(ii) whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).

If an offer of a place is withdrawn by the school, the Student on whose behalf the application was made shall lose his/her place on the admission list or waiting list for that academic year and any subsequent applications for the same academic year on behalf of that Student shall be treated as a late application in line with section 6.1.4 above.

### **6.1.9 Appeals:**

For information relating to an Applicant's right to appeal a decision of the Abbey Vocational School regarding admission to a year-group other than First-Year, see section 6.2.

## **6.2 APPEALS**

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### **6.2.1 Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission because the school is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision must submit his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of the Abbey Vocational School at The Glebe, Donegal Town, Co Donegal, email: abbeyvs@donegalvec.ie. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

If an Applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, or the board of management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the Applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **6.2.2 Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission to the Abbey Vocational School for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may choose to put his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of the Abbey Vocational School. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

Alternatively, s/he may choose to apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

If an Applicant who chooses to appeal to the board of management is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, the Applicant may also apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

**6.2.3 Basis for appeal:**

As required by section 29C(2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admission Policy, the content of the school's Admission Notice and also set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.

# SECTION 7

## APPLICATION TO THE SPECIAL CLASSES

### **7.1 Admission Provisions for the Special Classes**

- 7.1.1. Oversubscription
- 7.1.2. Selection criteria in order of priority
- 7.1.3. Selection process
- 7.1.4. Late Applications
- 7.1.5. Second/third-round offers of a place
- 7.1.6. Acceptance of a place
- 7.1.7. Refusal
- 7.1.8. Withdrawal of an offer

### **7.2 Appeals**

- 7.2.1. Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription
- 7.2.2. Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription
- 7.2.3. Basis for appeal

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Special Class for Students with a Moderate General Learning Disability

Appendix 2: Special Class for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

## **7.1 ADMISSION PROVISIONS FOR THE SPECIAL CLASSES**

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The Abbey Vocational School has a Special Class to cater for the special educational needs of Students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. It has a separate Special Class to cater for educational needs of students with Moderate General Learning Disability.

Only applications in respect of Students whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the Special Class will be considered.

Where the Special Classes in the Abbey Vocational School are not oversubscribed, all Students whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the Special Class will be offered a place in the Special Class, subject to sections 4.7 and 4.8.

In line with section 4.8, where the Special Class in the Abbey Vocational School is not oversubscribed, all Children whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the Special Class will be offered a place in the Special Class, subject to section 4.7.

Please see Appendix 1 and 2.

### **7.1.1 Oversubscription:**

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 7.1.2 below will apply and a waiting list shall be compiled which shall remain valid only for the school year in respect of which the applications are made. Where the Abbey Vocational School is in a position to offer further school places that become available for and during that academic year, places will be offered in accordance with the order of priority in which Students have been placed on the waiting list.

For the avoidance of doubt, if a Student does not receive a place in the school for a given academic year, but s/he wishes to be considered for admission to the same year group in the following academic year, a new application must be made on behalf of that Student during the dates specified by the school as being the period when it will accept applications made to all years other than the First-Year Group.

Where the school is oversubscribed, any selection criteria that are not included in this Admission Policy shall not be considered in determining whether or not a Student is admitted to the school.

**7.1.2 Selection criteria in order of priority:**

Applications to the Special Class will only be considered if the Student's needs fall within the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this class. Subject to this requirement, in the event of oversubscription, the following criteria for admission to the Special Class will apply:

**7.1.2.1** If the Student resides in the catchment area;

**7.1.2.2** If the Student has siblings currently enrolled in the school;

**7.1.3 Selection process:**

The Abbey Vocational School will apply the selection process as follows:

Having met the criteria for admission to the Special Class, applications are considered against the published selection criteria. Places will be offered in the first instance to those who meet the first criterion. Subsequently, where the school still has places available the remaining Applicants are considered against the second criterion and those Applicants who meet this criterion will be offered a place within the school. This process is continuously carried out until all available places have been offered and accepted.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, The Abbey Vocational School will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

**7.1.4 Late applications:**

An application received by the Abbey Vocational School after the closing date published by the Abbey Vocational School and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Where the Abbey Vocational School is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, that application will receive a place on the waiting list beneath Applicants whose applications were received by the school before the closing date for applications.



Such late applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the school and subsequently the school's selection criteria will be applied in accordance with this Admission Policy.

Where the Abbey Vocational School is not oversubscribed and it receives a late application, the Student seeking admission will receive an offer of a place within the Abbey Vocational School, subject to sections 4.7 and 4.8, and the same process as applies to Applicants whose applications were received before the closing date will be applied *i.e.* an Acceptance Form will be issued to the Applicant for completion and return to the school within 2 weeks of issue.

#### **7.1.5. Second/third-round offers of a place**

Where a Student is in receipt of an offer of a place within the Abbey Vocational School but does not accept the offer, or the school withdraws the offer in line with the relevant provisions of this Policy, the place will be offered to the next Student on the waiting list in a second-round of offers. This process will continue throughout third and fourth rounds *etc.* until all places within the school have been filled.

#### **7.1.6. Acceptance of a place:**

If the Student in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the school.

The Applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school.

Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school by the date set out in the school's Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for withdrawal of an offer, as set out below.

### **7.1.7 Refusal:**

Where a Student in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 7.1.7.1** The reasons that the Student was not offered a place in the Abbey Vocational School.
- 7.1.7.2** Details of the Student's ranking against the published selection criteria, if the year-group to which the applicant is applying is oversubscribed;
- 7.1.7.3** Details of the Student's place on the waiting list, if applicable; and
- 7.1.7.4** Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision.

In addition to the conditions for consideration of an application as set out at 4.7 and 4.8, an offer of admission may not be made where:

- 7.1.7.5** The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect.

### **7.1.8 Withdrawal of an offer**

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- 7.1.8.1.** The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect, or
- 7.1.8.2.** The 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 for the academic year for which s/he is applying, or in the case of a late application, or second/third-round offer, within 2 weeks, or
- 7.1.8.3.** An Applicant has not indicated:
  - (i) whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s);and
  - (ii) whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).

If an offer of a place is withdrawn by the school, the Student on whose behalf the application was made shall lose his/her place on the admission list or waiting list for that academic year and any subsequent applications for the same academic year on behalf of that Student shall be treated as a late application in line with section 7.1.4 above.

## **7.2 APPEALS**

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### **7.2.1 Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission because the school is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision must submit his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of the Abbey Vocational School at The Glebe, Donegal Town, Co Donegal, email: [abbeyvs@donegalvec.ie](mailto:abbeyvs@donegalvec.ie). Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

If an Applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, or the board of management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the Applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### **7.2.2 Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription:**

An Applicant who was refused admission to the Abbey Vocational School for a reason other than the school being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may choose to put his/her appeal in writing, via a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the school office and on the school's website, for it to be reviewed by the board of management of the Abbey Vocational School. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the school's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

Alternatively, s/he may choose to apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

If an Applicant who chooses to appeal to the board of management is not satisfied with the decision of the board of management, the Applicant may also apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

**7.2.3 Basis for appeal:**

As required by section 29C(2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admission Policy, the content of the school's Admission Notice and also set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.

## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1:**

Please also see the Abbey Vocational Moderate Class Policy.

Special Class for Students with a Moderate General Learning Disability:

“A special class is defined as a class which has been officially sanctioned by the DES or NCSE, which has a defined pupil teacher ratio and is designated for a particular category of disability” (NCSE, 2011, p.40).

The designated category of disability for the special class is Moderate General Learning Disability.

The total number of places in the Special Class is 8.

- The applicant must have a diagnosis of Moderate General Learning Difficulties. This diagnosis must be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure and the report confirming this must be submitted with the application for admission to the Special Class.
- To ensure applicants are in the most appropriate placement so that their educational progress can be optimised, applicants who do not have a diagnosis of Moderate General Learning Disability or who have a diagnosis of a more severe learning disability will not be considered for admission.
- An Educational Psychologist Report, which cannot be dated more than two years prior to the application date, outlining the student’s ability and a recommendation for educational placement in a special class environment under the designated category of Moderate General Learning Disability, must be submitted with the application form.
- The applicant’s parents must fully complete, sign and date the admissions application form/Transfer form and supply all specified documentation which must be submitted to the School office on or before the closing date
- Where an application/transfer form is not fully completed, and/or all the required reports have not been furnished, the application will be deemed incomplete. The

parents will be notified that the application will not be considered until a complete application is submitted.

- Students must be suitable for inclusion in some mainstream classes or activities with their peer group.

## **Appendix 2;**

Please also see the Abbey Vocational ASD Policy.

Special Class for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

All students are on the ASD spectrum and vary from low functioning to high functioning Autism.

The following documentation must be presented to be considered for a place in the ASD support class:

- A completed enrolment form.
- An Educational/Clinical Psychologist's Report recommending the candidate is suitable for a placement in an Autism Spectrum Disorder support classroom. The classroom will cater for children with mild general learning difficulties or moderate learning difficulties. The classroom is currently not in a position to accommodate children with severe or profound learning difficulties.
- A report from the student's primary school outlining the student's academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs and outlining the current extent of social integration.
- Any other reports e.g. Speech and Language Therapy or Occupational Therapy
- A signed consent form from parents/guardians granting the school permission to access any relevant reports from previous schools attended.
- Students must be suitable for inclusion in some mainstream classes or activities with their peer group.

Enrolment may be refused to the Abbey Vocational School's ASD support classroom if:

- Students are deemed a risk to themselves or others.
- Enrolment would have a detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's needs are such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and the HSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.