

# SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

Final Draft August 2014



ATHY COLLEGE

Athy

County Kildare

## Mission Statement

*'In a caring school we are dedicated to fostering educational excellence empowering all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and co-operation we openly respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of each individual'.*

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## Introduction

Athy College is a co-educational post-primary school in Athy, County Kildare. In 2010, the school moved to a newly built school building located at Tomard, Monasterevin Road, Athy. It is one of four schools on this campus which is owned by Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board.

## Athy College Educational Policy

Education could be defined as the on-going development of each one of us so that we may realise our true and best self. It follows, therefore, that educators should be open to change and innovation, initiators of new development in this continuing, life-long process we call education. Students should feel themselves to be partners in their own education.

The school aims to prepare students for public examinations, in an age when academic qualifications are indispensable for admission to further education and entry into many forms of employment. Therefore, the school pursues examination courses leading to:-

(a) Junior Certificate; Junior Certificate Schools Programme

(b) Leaving Certificate; Leaving Certificate Vocational, Leaving Certificate Applied

The school recognises that its students are of varying cultural and religious backgrounds, aspirations and abilities. The constitutional rights of students not to attend religious instruction are upheld by Athy College. Department of Education and Skills Junior Certificate Religious Education syllabus is offered to all Junior cycle students.

More and more is being expected of education in school. It should prepare students for life at work; for relationships; for leisure and for an ever-changing world, which demands for everyone, a capacity for adaptation and adjustment. To meet these needs, the school offers a variety of leisure activities and a sports programme, as well as fostering creative abilities and implements a Pastoral Care Programme to provide genuine human and social education aimed at developing the emotional growth of each student as an individual.

The school recognises the vital role that parents play in the overall education for their children. Contact with Parents is invaluable and they should feel free to visit the school, meet teachers by appointment and generally become involved in all aspects of school life. The HSCL co-ordinator facilitates this.

The school recognises the importance of the Community in which the student lives. For this reason, every effort is made to ensure that the student is aware of life in the community and is encouraged to be involved in organisations and activities. Athy College does not request fees or contributions as a condition of application for admission to the school or as a condition of continued enrolment in the school following admission. In accordance with the provisions of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2013, implementation of the school's admission policy is a function of the school Principal.

## Athy College Diversity, Inclusion and Equality

Athy College is a multi denominational co educational second level school under the governance of Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board. The school welcomes students of all faiths and none.

Athy College is an inclusive school. The school respects, values and accommodates diversity in the student community. The school seeks positive experiences, a sense of belonging and the achievement of academic potential for all students. Students with disabilities and/or special educational needs are welcomed in Athy College and the school requests that parents work with the school authorities in providing all relevant information to the school to ensure the timely planning for physical and educational needs and the applications for additional resources.

Athy College notes the provision in the Equal Status Act that a school is exempt from the requirement to provide a service to a student with a disability in the event that doing so would (because of the student's disability) have a seriously detrimental effect on the provision of services to other students or would make it impossible to provide services to other students.

Athy College will not discriminate against an applicant for admission to the school on the grounds of:

- I. the student having a disability or special educational need;
- II. the student's sexual orientation;
- III. the student's family status
- IV. the student being a member of the Traveller Community;
- V. the student's race;
- VI. the student's civil status;
- VII. the student's gender;
- VIII. the student's faith or religious tradition or;

the student having no faith.

## Scope of the Admissions Policy

The Admissions Policy outlines:

- the enrolment process of students from primary school to Athy College
- the enrolment process for the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Special Classes in Athy College
- the enrolment process for students who wish to transfer from another post-primary school to Athy College

Please note that Athy College closes from the date of the last State Examination in June until the second Monday of August each year.

## Legislation which informs Admissions Policy

- Education Acts 1998 and 2013 Procedures and Timelines for the Admission of Students to Schools and Related Matters Regulations 2013
- Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Education Act 1998

## Aim of Admissions Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- Outline the process of admission to Athy College
- Ensure that parents / guardians have the information required to make an application for admission to Athy College
- Ensure that all applications for admission to Athy College are dealt with efficiently and fairly

## Eligibility Criteria:

- A student must reach the age of twelve years by January 1<sup>st</sup> in the calendar year following his/her entry into First Year
- A student must have completed sixth class in primary school or its equivalent
- A student and his/her parents/guardians must accept Athy College Code of Behaviour
- Additional eligibility criteria apply for applications for a place in the ASD Special Class (see below)

- Additional eligibility criteria apply for applications for transfer to Athy College from another post-primary school (see below)

## Process for Admission to First Year in Athy College

On or before 14<sup>th</sup> September of each year the Board of Management of Athy College will publish notice of admission to First Year for the following academic year in accordance with Regulation 16 of Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2013. This notice of admission will be published on Athy College website.

The notice of admission published will inform parents/guardians of the date from which the Principal may accept applications in accordance with Regulation 9 of Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2013. The notice of admission will also include the following details of the school's arrangements for the admission of students:

- (i) Details of how the admission policy of the school can be obtained;
- (ii) Details of how an application form can be obtained;
- (iii) The date from which applications to intake groups will be accepted;
- (iv) The latest date for receipt of applications to intake groups

Athy College will hold an Open Day for 6<sup>th</sup> Class students in all schools in the locality and an Open Day for Parents each September. The purpose of the Open Days is to welcome prospective students and parents/guardians to Athy College and provide information on the school and the school's admissions process. The attendance or non-attendance of a student or his or her parent at any event referred to in Regulation 18 of Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2013 shall not be taken into account in any decision in respect of that applicant.

Athy College School Admissions Policy, Application forms for Admission and Code of Behaviour will be published on Athy College website and available for download. Furthermore details of the dates decided upon for the admissions process in accordance with Regulation 7 are made available to any parent or other person who requests such information from the school on or after the first day of October preceding the start of the school year for which admission is being sought.

The Principal will accept applications for admission to Athy College from the 1<sup>st</sup> October to 1pm the fourth Friday in October in any calendar year.

The Principal will communicate in writing decisions on an application to the applicant no later than three weeks following the closing date for applications. Parents/guardians must confirm, in writing to the Principal, acceptance of the offer of a place in Athy College on or before the last Friday in November in any calendar year. The Principal shall notify all unsuccessful applicants in writing of the right to appeal the decision on or before the last Friday in November.

The Principal of Athy College may withdraw the offer of a school place in the following circumstances:

- (i) An applicant fails in accordance with Regulation 39 to confirm acceptance of an offer of enrolment in writing or
- (ii) A student fails to attend the school on the admission date without providing reason in writing to the school Principal within the following 3 days.
- (iii) It is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

The applicant may appeal a decision that has been made under Regulation 44 of Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2013. Following written acceptance of a school place in Athy College, students will be invited to complete an entrance assessment test.

## Oversubscription

In the event of oversubscription, Athy College will implement oversubscription procedures as outlined below. Where the number of applications for admission to intake groups is greater than the number of places being made available, a sufficient number of offers of enrolment shall be made on a provisional basis in order to cater for the outcome of any appeals by unsuccessful applicants. The number of offers of enrolment to be made on a provisional basis in accordance with Regulation 32 of Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2013 shall, subject to the number of available places, be equal to the number of unsuccessful applicants.

Where an offer of enrolment is made on a provisional basis, the Principal will inform the applicant in writing of the date by which the Principal will either confirm an offer of enrolment or withdraw the offer. Where an offer of enrolment is made on a provisional basis or where a provisional offer is subsequently withdrawn, the Principal will inform the applicant in writing of the applicant's right to appeal that decision. All appeals will be concluded by 20th January following the application process.

In the event of the decision of the Board of Management of Athy College to refuse admission, the Principal will:

- Provide the reasons for the refusal, including, where appropriate, details of why the student failed to meet the oversubscription criteria;
- Provide details of the student's position on any waiting list drawn up in accordance with Regulation 43 of Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2013;
- Inform the applicant /parent /guardian of the right of appeal, and
- Provide details of how such an appeal can be made.

## Oversubscription Criteria

In the event that the number of students seeking admission exceeds the number of places being made available by Athy College, the following criteria will be applied in the order stated:

1. A student who resides in the area where Athy College is the nearest post-primary school as deemed by Department of Education and Skills and Bus Eireann for transport purposes
2. A student who has a sibling who is currently attending Athy College;
3. A student who has a parent who is a member of the staff of the school;
4. A student who has a sibling who previously attended Athy College.

If two or more students are tied for a place following the application of these criteria, a supervised lottery will take place to determine which student will be offered the place.

## Athy College Waiting List

The Principal of Athy College will compile a waiting list from unsuccessful applications to intake groups which shall remain valid for the period up to the second Friday in September in the academic year of intake subject to:

- (i) Students being placed on this list in accordance with the order of priority of the oversubscription criteria as set down in Athy College School Admission Policy
- (ii) The Principal offering any further school places that become available during the period up to second Friday in September in the school year in which admission is being sought, firstly to those students on the waiting list and such offers being made in accordance with the order of priority in which the students have been placed on this list.

## Special Educational Needs

Athy College is an inclusive school where all students belong equally to the school community and are educated within a framework in which differences between individual students are respected particularly in relation to:

- Children with a disability or special educational needs
- Children who have diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and culture.

Parents/Guardians who seek to enrol their son/daughter with special educational needs should follow the same admission process as set out above. In addition to this, parents/guardians of students who have a disability and/or special educational needs must co-operate with the school to enable the Principal of Athy College to forward plan in a timely manner for essential learning and care supports in response to the student's particular needs. In particular, following the written offer of a school place in Athy College, parents/guardians must furnish the school with all educational, psychological and medical reports as are relevant to informing the Principal as to learning, medical and behavioural needs and to apply on behalf of the school to the National Council for Special Education to secure additional teaching and/or Special Needs Assistant supports. It must be noted that the N.C.S.E. deadline for the following academic year is normally in the month of March preceding the academic year. Parents/Guardians must ensure that copies of reports are delivered to the school no later than the second Friday in January preceding the year of admission.

## Admission Criteria for ASD Unit in Athy College

In addition to the general Admissions Policy the following criteria apply to the admission of students to the Athy College ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Unit:

- Parents/Guardians must supply most recent psychological reports which must indicate a clear diagnosis of autism and state that the applicant's needs can only be met in an ASD Special class placement
- That the student must be capable of some level of integration into the whole school environment. Indicators are that the needs of a student not capable of any level of integration are best met in a Special School placement.
- Athy College is committed in the first instance to provide placements for students who reside in the area where Athy College is the nearest post-primary school as deemed by Department of Education and Skills and Bus Eireann for transport purposes.
- Admission is always subject to a place being available. Admission is subject to the number of places and classes sanctioned by the DES. The recommended limit under Health and Safety Guidelines is a maximum of six students per class. Athy College will strictly observe this limit. Thereafter, a waiting list will apply.
- It is the responsibility of parents / guardians to provide all of the documentation, reports and information required or requested to determine eligibility to apply for a placement in the ASD Unit.

In the event that the number of students seeking admission to Athy College ASD Unit exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order stated:

1. A student who resides in the area where Athy College is the nearest post-primary school as deemed by Department of Education and Skills and Bus Eireann for transport purposes
2. A student who has a sibling who is currently attending Athy College;
3. A student who has a parent who is a member of the staff of the school;
4. A student who has a sibling who previously attended Athy College;

If two or more students are tied for a place following the application of these criteria, a supervised lottery will take place to determine which student will be offered the place.

## Transfer Policy

All transfer applications must comply with the school's Admission Policy and are subject to a place being available.

Applicants must:

- Make written application to transfer on the official Athy College application to transfer form  
All applications will be responded to within three working weeks from the date of receipt of application. Please note that Athy College closes from the date of the last State Examination in June until the second Monday of August each year.
- Attend for interview/s with member/s of school's Admission Committee. The student must be accompanied by parent/guardian.
- Provide a written reference from his/her previous school Principal
- Provide copies of all examination results (including State Exam results) to date.
- Provide all relevant education records
- Provide a psychological report (where one exists)
- Provide passport number, PPS number, student identity number, details of status in state, where deemed relevant.
- Provide any report deemed to assist the applicant and the school authorities.

The School reserves the right to contact previous educational establishments and any other relevant authorities where records of the student may exist.

In the case that an applicant is being permanently excluded from another school and that student is now seeking a placement at Athy College, the following applies:

Written evidence must be presented from the student's Educational Welfare Officer / Department of Education and Skills to the Principal and the Board of Management of Athy College to prove that all Section 29 procedures have been exhausted before any application for transfer is processed.