

Admissions and Participation Policy

The School

Benincasa School is a Roman Catholic co-educational school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin and the trusteeship of the Congregation of Dominican sisters. It caters for children with special needs from Junior Infants to sixteen years. Children are of average or above average intellectual ability and are on the autistic continuum, have emotional/behavioural difficulties or a combination of difficulties in these areas.

As a Roman Catholic School, the school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all pupils cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The school operates under the Rules for National Schools and Departmental Circulars and is funded by grants from the Department of Education and skills, The Health Board and Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council. Staff are resourced by the Department of Education and Science. The school is subject to the Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) equality law and all other relevant legislation. Benincasa follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Skills amended in order to provide an appropriate education for each child.

Admissions

The Admissions policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 in order to assist parents in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Principal will endeavour to clarify any further questions arising from the policy.

Application Procedure

Applicants must be 12 years of age or under, or have attended a Special School. Applications for placement are considered on receipt of a letter of request for admission to the school or providing appropriate available reports such as:

- Cognitive assessment
- Psychiatric assessment
- Speech and Language assessment
- Occupational therapy report
- Social work report
- Recent school report

Following receipt of these reports and consideration by the admission sub-committee of the Board of Management, the applicants parents/ guardians will be issued with an Enrolment Form, Admissions and Participation Policy and Code of Behaviours. The parents/ guardians must return the Enrolment Form with official proof of age ie. Birth Certificate should be returned promptly to the school in order to secure a placement.

Enrolment

- Children for whom the school is considered appropriate will be enrolled on application provided there is a vacancy.
- Where possible, enrolment should take place at the beginning of the school year. In exceptional cases, consideration will be given to a child during the school year.
- Decisions in relation to application for enrolment are made by the Board of Management.
- Parents will be informed of acceptance of the child to the school within the allocated time as laid down by the Education Act.
- No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious/political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.
- The completion of an Application Form or the placement of your child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.

Children enrolled in Benincasa School are required to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies. Parents/Guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child co-operates with these policies in an age-appropriate way.

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment exceeding the number of places available the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment.

- Whether a child who is deemed appropriate for enrolment has a sibling in the school.
- Urgency of enrolment.
- Applications in order of application date

Children of other faiths or no faith

Bearing in mind the Catholic and Dominican ethos of the school, every effort will be made so that the school is as inclusive as possible. While Catholic education and the ethos of the school permeate the day, children of other faiths or none will not be required to attend formal religious instruction classes nor to attend specifically Catholic liturgies. As far as possible suitable alternative arrangements will be made in order to facilitate this. It will not be possible however, to provide religious instruction in other faiths.

Exceptional Circumstances

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to a pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

- The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education.
- The members of the Board of Management are reasonably clear from reports, that the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to self or other pupils, to school staff or the school property.

Appeals

In line with section 28 of the Education Act 1998, parents who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. This appeal must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education & Science under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. Appeal forms will be provided by the school. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol.

Signed:_____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date:_____