
FIRHOUSE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE



ADMISSIONS POLICY



Introduction

This Admissions Policy should be considered in conjunction with the Firhouse Community College Code of Behaviour and the Education Act 1998. The rationale for this policy is to provide fair, transparent and effective criteria for admission of students to this College in compliance with legislative requirements. The procedures outlined in this policy may, from time to time, as circumstances demand, be varied or altered.

Firhouse Community College was established in 1982 to meet the second-level, educational needs of the local community. As a co-educational, non-selective, multi-denominational school, we believe in the principle of education for all. We value the uniqueness of each member of our school community. We are committed to equality in all aspects of school life. Firhouse Community College welcomes all students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education.

Within the parameters of Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes, the ethos and mission statement of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board and of this College, and the funding, resources and places available, the Board of Management supports the principles of

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of students with disability or other special educational needs
- Equality with respect to maximum access and participation in the school.
- Respect for a diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in Irish society.

Working together as a school community, the Board of Management, parents, staff and students aim to provide the best possible environment which will allow each student to develop intellectually, physically, morally, socially and spiritually so as they will be able to fulfil their role in society.

School Programmes

Firhouse Community College offers a three-year Junior Cycle programme leading to the Junior Certificate Examination of the Department of Education and Skills. The school also offers the Junior Certificate School Programme. Transition Year is compulsory for all students except those who follow the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. As well as the established two year Leaving Certificate course, the school also offers the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

Enrolment procedures for entry to First Year

Each year the Board of Management may decide in advance the number of students in each year group for whom the College can provide an appropriate education having regard to the facilities, teacher allocation and resources. All applications for places in Firhouse Community College shall be submitted on the approved application form to the Principal. The Board of Management reserves the right to seek, clarify or verify any information contained in the application form. An ethos statement and the school code of behaviour shall be available to each applicant.

Only such forms that have been completed in full will be considered by the Principal. Completion of such a form does not guarantee a place in the school. Applications should be submitted by mid-October in the year preceding entry and will be given a reference number. The actual closing date for receipt of applications will be communicated to parents and students each year through the primary schools, the College annual *Open Evening* and other promotional material. (The closing date for applications for First Year 2018/2019 will be **Friday 13th October 2017**).

For the school year 2017/2018 and until further review of this policy, the maximum number of students in each year group will be set by the Board of Management.

The number of places for 1st Year 2018/2019 has been set by the Board **at 144**.

Selection Criteria for 1st Year 2018

The College will use the following order of priority to allocate places:

- Students from the three main feeder primary schools - Scoil Treasa, Holy Rosary and Glenasmole
- Brothers and sisters of current students who attend other primary schools;
- Students living in the local catchment area who attend other primary schools
- Students whose families relocate to the area
- Students not living in the local catchment area who attend other primary schools
- Children of staff and former students

Offer of a Place in Firhouse Community College

The offer of a place is conditional on the following:

- The student has reached the required age of 12 on the 1st January in the calendar year following the child's entry into first year;
- Students of Irish nationality have completed sixth class in Primary school;
- The school is provided with details of the child's PPS No. and mother's maiden name as required by the Department of Education and Skills.
- Students from other countries have reached a comparable standard of education;
- The parent/guardian confirms, in writing, by letter of email, the acceptance of a place within twenty one days of the offer being posted;
- If an applicant does not respond to an offer for a place within this twenty one day period, the place offer will be withdrawn and offered to another applicant. Applicants will be notified of this withdrawal in writing;
- The parent/guardian attends with the child at the Enrolment Day (set for Saturday 26th November 2016) to complete the registration process.
- The student attends and completes the College entrance assessment in the period January - March preceding their entry to the College.

Enrolment Day

On Enrolment Day, **Wednesday 22th November 2017**, the parent/guardian is requested to provide:

- A copy of the Birth certificate/passport of the student to be enrolled;
- Two passport sized photographs of the student;
- Any psychological/medical reports regarding special educational needs of the student;
- A recent school report from the student's primary school;
- A non-refundable deposit (€100), which will be set against the Sports & Cultural Fund
- A signed copy of the school Code of Behaviour, stating that the parent is aware of the Code and agrees to support its implementation.

Waiting List/Late Applications

In the event of the school having more applications than places available, the unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list and will be allocated places according to the order of priority listed above. Parents/guardians of students on the waiting list will be informed whenever a suitable vacancy occurs and the parents will have the option to accept or refuse the place offered to their child. The waiting list operates on the same criteria outlined on page 3.

The waiting list will remain open until the last Friday in September of the year of entry. Following this date the remaining applicants will be contacted and informed that the waiting list is no longer active. Should the parent/guardian still wish their child to be considered for a place in the College they should confirm this in writing and a new waiting list will be created. In all cases when an application for a place is refused, the parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision.

Special Educational Needs

The Board of Management and the staff of the College will do everything possible to identify, plan and provide for a student with special needs seeking admission to the College. We will endeavour to make every effort to provide an integrated and inclusive education. Therefore, parents should contact the College with information on any special needs as early as possible so that these needs can be assessed and addressed properly.

In making provision for students with special needs the following information is required:

Has the student had access to any of the following resources?

- a) Special needs assistant
- b) Special class
- c) Help, for specific needs, from any resource teacher
- d) Assistance with behavioural modification
- e) Professional assessment. (Report should be provided to school)
- f) Any additional resources to help with special needs
- g) Help in areas including visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or emotional disturbance.
- h) Any resource in relation to travel or mobility etc.

If an expert report is available it should include a workable strategy for addressing the needs, allowing for the resources available.

Allocation to Classes

Classes are organised in the College on a mixed ability basis. From first year, the base classes are mixed to take account of -

- The spread of ability as ascertained by the assessment test
- A balance of boys and girls
- The primary school of origin
- Additional information, educational and family background.

The College provides opportunities for students to achieve in line with their potential. Teachers are encouraged to promote student achievement and to expect effort and performance relative to the student's ability. All pupils should have the opportunity to aspire to Higher-level courses. By "setting" different levels in certain subjects and by particular interventions, such as smaller classes and learning support withdrawal, individual differences of attainment can be catered for.

It is envisaged that all students take certain **core** subjects-

Junior Certificate - Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography, Science, French, CSPE, SPHE, RE, PE and choose **two option** subjects from the following - Music, Art, Home Economics, Technical Graphics, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork, Business Studies.

Leaving Certificate - Irish, English, Maths, RE, PE and choose **four option** subjects from the following - French, Japanese, Geography, History, Business, Economics, Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Home Economics, Technical Drawing, Construction Studies, Engineering, Art, Music. If students have the required combination of subjects they may also do Link Modules (LCVP).

Incoming first year and fifth year students must return an *Option Choice* form to the school by the deadline date advertised. Getting one's subject choices depends on the numbers choosing particular subjects and the availability of spaces in classes. It may also depend on a student's aptitude for the subject and the advice of the subject teacher. Where an option form is returned after the due date for processing, subjects will be allocated on an available basis.

Transfer of a Student from another School

The Principal is authorised by the Board of Management to take decisions on student intake consistent with this admissions policy. In line with the Education Welfare Act 2000, these decisions will be notified to parents as soon as possible.

While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management upholds the rights of the existing school community and in particular the students already enrolled. Principles of natural justice will apply to act in the best interests of all students. The Board reserves the right to determine the maximum number of students in each class group bearing in mind the following:

- Department of Education guidelines in relation to the maximum class size and staffing provision
- Size and space of classrooms
- Health and safety of students
- Educational needs of the applicants
- The needs of the current students

Under the Transfer Policy, priority will be given to students relocating to the area. Except in the case of a student relocating to the area, applications will only be considered at the start of each school year. Cases at variance with these circumstances may be referred to the Board. In the case of LCA, as the work is based on continuous assessment and has an attendance requirement of 90%, no applications will be accepted after 15th September of the first year of the course.

Students seeking to transfer from another school must complete a Transfer Application Form and meet with the Principal or Deputy Principal. All relevant information from the former school should be made available. Enrolments to all years and courses are subject, in the first instance, to a place being available and the studied option subjects being available. The reason for the proposed transfer will be discussed with the parents and the student as appropriate. Transfer to the school shall be on the basis that such would be in the best interests of the student concerned, given curricular provision, subject choices, and facilities available at the time and any other relevant factors affecting the educational benefits to the applicant and the likely impact on students already in school.

In the case of a student being suspended or excluded from his/her current school, all appeal procedures to that school should have been exhausted prior to an application to this school being considered.

Where a student is considered for a place, the decision will be taken by the Principal, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians, his/her former school and the education welfare officer (if applicable). The decision will be taken as to whether such a place may be offered, immediately, or whether it would be better to wait until the beginning of the next academic year.

The Board of Management of Firhouse Community College shall not refuse to admit as a student a child, in respect of whom an application to be so admitted has been made, except where such refusal is in accordance with the published policy of the College. All disputes in relation to admission will be referred to Firhouse Community College Board of Management.

Re-enrolment of Students

Prior to the end of each school year i.e. from March onwards, the College tries to establish if a student intends to return in September. Parents and students are invited to indicate, **in writing**, that they wish to avail of a place in the College for the next year. Failure to return this information may mean a loss of place in a class or in a subject area.

Students who leave the College during the school year to transfer to another school or to take up employment but who later seek re-admittance will have their application dealt with as if it were a first time application.

Formal Enrolment for 2018

The Enrolment Process will begin with the opening of applications from **Monday 8th May 2017**. The Closing Date for Applications will be **Friday 13th October 2017**. **Parents will be notified whether or not their child is being offered a place in Round 1, during November 2018.**

From this point, there are a number of steps which students and their parents/guardians engage in to prepare for their start in Firhouse Community College, as outlined below in our Positive Start Programme

Positive Start Programme

This is a programme designed to help students prepare for the transition from primary to post primary school and to give their parents/guardians all the information and support they will need.

JANUARY 2018

Information Evening for Parents & Guardians held in the college, with 1st Year Enrolment Packs distributed.

FEBRUARY 2018

Assessment Tests held for students.

Student Profile Forms sent to the primary schools

Meetings with parents of students with a Special Educational Need in preparation for applications to the SENO for appropriate resources and supports.

MARCH 2018

Option Morning held for students in the college, where they meet the Option teachers and hear about the subjects. Deadline date for submitting Subject Option Forms during this month

Firhouse Community College submits applications to the SENO for Special Educational Needs resources and supports.

APRIL 2018

Firhouse Community College Year Head and teachers visit main feeder schools for information meetings with 6th Class teachers.

MAY 2018

Prefects visit our main feeder schools to meet with incoming students.

Individual visits to Firhouse Community College for students with Special Educational Needs.

JUNE 2018

College writes to each student confirming their subject options and book lists.

AUGUST 2018

The Principal writes to each student with details of the start date at the end of August and an outline of their first week in the college.

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2018

Informal tutor group Coffee Mornings for parents/guardians of new 1st Years.

Rights of the Board to Refuse Enrolment

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application to enrol where in the opinion of the Board,

- a) All available places have already been allocated to current students.
- b) Adequate physical accommodation is not available for the applicant.
- c) A decision to enrol would constitute a risk to the health and safety of other students enrolled.
- d) The school programme is unsuitable to the educational needs of the student and alternative suitable arrangements for an appropriate programme cannot reasonably be made at the school.
- e) A decision to enrol would clearly have a demonstrable impact on the capacity of the school to deliver programmes to other students and alternative arrangements cannot reasonably be made at the school.
- f) It is not satisfied that it has sufficient information to make an informed decision on the educational needs of the student.

Right to Appeal to Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board

Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) parents/guardians have the right to appeal a refusal by the school to enrol a student, within 20 school days. Appeal forms are available from Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB on 01-4529600.

The following legal documents were consulted in drafting this Admissions Policy:

- ❖ Constitution of Ireland
- ❖ Education Act 1998
- ❖ Education (Welfare)Act 2002
- ❖ EPSON Act (2004)
- ❖ Equal Status Act 2002
- ❖ Data Protection Act 1988
- ❖ Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989
- ❖ Circular Letter M48/01