CHEEVERSTOWN SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2026/2027

School Address: Templeogue, Dublin 6W, D6W RT92 Roll number: 20053J

Introduction

This Admissions Policy is prepared in accordance with the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, the Equal Status Act 2000, and all relevant Department of Education circulars, including Circular Letter 0039/2025. The Board of Management has consulted with school staff, the school patron, and parents of children attending the school in the preparation of this policy.

The policy is available on the school website and is available in hard copy on request. Relevant dates and deadlines for the admission process are set out each year in the school's Annual Admission Notice.

Characteristic Spirit and General Objectives

Cheeverstown School's mission is to provide the highest standard of education and care to children with severe and profound learning disabilities, aged 4 to 18 years. The school promotes a secure, nurturing environment and individualised educational programmes that address every student's intellectual, spiritual and physical needs, in keeping with an ethos of respect, equality and inclusion.

Staff include the Principal, Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Bus Escorts and a School Secretary, working in partnership with parents/guardians and health professionals.

Admission Statement

Cheeverstown School does not discriminate in its admission of a student on any of the following grounds: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, race, Traveller community membership, or special educational needs, as defined in Section 61(3) of the Education Act 1998.

With the approval of the Minister for Education and Youth, Cheeverstown School provides education exclusively for students within the category or categories of special educational needs designated for the school by the Minister and the NCSE (currently severe and profound learning disabilities) and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student with the specified category of need.

In line with Circular 0039/2025 and the associated Information Note, Cheeverstown School does not refuse admission to an eligible applicant on the grounds of potential behaviour, where the child meets the eligibility criteria for the school as set out in this policy.

Categories of Special Educational Needs Catered For

Cheeverstown School, with Ministerial approval, provides education solely for students within the category or categories of special educational needs designated for the school by the Minister and the NCSE (currently severe and profound learning disabilities). Admissions are only considered for pupils within this designation, in line with current Department and NCSE guidance.

No change in category is anticipated unless directed by the NCSE or the Department of Education and Youth.

Eligibility Criteria for Admission

Eligibility criteria for admission to special schools are set down by the Department of Education and Youth and the NCSE and are set out in Department circular letters and NCSE guidelines. Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria to be considered for admission to Cheeverstown School.

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in Cheeverstown School for the designated category of special educational needs when the following is provided in support of such an application:

- Professional report(s) outlining:
    a. A diagnosis of special educational needs consistent with the school's designation (currently severe and profound learning disability), as set out in recognised diagnostic frameworks and professional guidance.

AND

    b. A demonstration of the understanding of the complexity of the child's overall level of needs, as evidenced in the professional reports.

AND

    c. Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same.

AND

    d. A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a place in Cheeverstown School for the relevant category of special educational need.

From the 2026/2027 school year onwards, all applicants must have a letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special school placement, in line with Circular 0039/2025.

The eligibility criteria above align with Circular 0039/2025 and current NCSE guidelines. No additional eligibility criteria for admission to Cheeverstown School may be applied.

Engagement with NCSE

Parents/guardians seeking a place in Cheeverstown School are advised to notify the NCSE of their child's need for a special school placement by 1 October in the school year prior to the requested start date, using the NCSE "parents notify" process.

The NCSE will review the supporting reports and provide a letter to parents/guardians confirming whether the child meets the eligibility criteria for a special school placement, which should accompany the school application.

Admission of Students

Subject to this policy, the school shall admit each student who meets the published eligibility criteria and who applies for admission to Cheeverstown School, except where:

The school is oversubscribed (see Oversubscription section below).

A parent/guardian fails to confirm in writing that they accept the school's Code of Behaviour.

Cheeverstown School may refuse admission only where the student does not meet the specified category of special educational needs catered for by the school, in line with Department and NCSE direction.

Admission will not be refused on the basis of potential behaviour, additional documentation requirements beyond those specified in the eligibility criteria, or the availability of resources, where a child otherwise meets the eligibility criteria.

Oversubscription

Cheeverstown School is considered oversubscribed where the number of eligible applicants for a particular school year exceeds the number of places available for that year. In such circumstances, a clear, transparent and non-discriminatory selection process is applied.

Selection Criteria When Oversubscribed

Where there are more eligible applicants than places available, places will be allocated using the following selection criteria, strictly in the order listed:

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria and for whom Cheeverstown School is named in a decision or direction by the NCSE or the Department of Education and Youth (e.g. following a designation or Section 37A process).

Remaining applicants who meet the eligibility criteria, ranked by the date on which a complete application (including the NCSE letter and required professional reports) is received by the school within the official application period.

Where two or more applicants are tied under (2), priority will be given to the older child, based on date of birth.

All applications received within the official application period as set out in the Annual Admission Notice will be considered first.

Waiting List and Late Applications

Where Cheeverstown School is oversubscribed:

Unsuccessful eligible applicants will be placed on a waiting list for that school year, ranked according to the same selection criteria used for initial offers.

As places become available for that school year, offers will be made to students on the waiting list in strict order of priority.

The waiting list remains valid for the school year in question only; it does not automatically roll forward to subsequent years.

Late applications:

Late applications (received after the closing date in the Annual Admission Notice) will be processed in line with this policy and relevant Department/NCSE regulations

Eligible late applicants will be added to the end of the waiting list for that school year, in the order received.

Late applicants, including those already enrolled in another setting within Cheeverstown or who are local, cannot be prioritised ahead of applicants already on the waiting list who meet the eligibility criteria.

If a student is not offered a place, the school will communicate the reasons, the applicant's ranking and place on the waiting list in writing, along with information about review and appeal procedures.

What Will Not Be Considered or Taken Into Account

In accordance with Section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act 1998 and Circular Letter 0039/2025, the following will not influence admission decisions:

- Prior attendance at preschool or early years settings (except where required by law or Department regulation for specific schemes).
- Payment of fees or voluntary contributions.
- The student's or parent's/guardian's academic ability, skills, aptitude, financial status or occupation.
- Attendance at interviews, open events or "taster" sessions.
- Family connection with current or past students or staff.

The date and time of receipt of an application within the official application window, except where specifically used in the selection criteria for ranking eligible applicants or managing waiting lists, as set out in this policy.

These provisions apply in full to all applications to Cheeverstown School as a special school.

Decisions on Applications

All admissions decisions are made on behalf of the Board of Management in accordance with this policy, the school's Annual Admission Notice, and the completed application and supporting documentation.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application within the timelines set out in the Annual Admission Notice. Notifications will include:

- Whether an offer of a place is being made.
- If not, the reason(s) for refusal, the applicant's ranking, and their place on the waiting list (where applicable).
- Information on how to request a review or make an appeal.

Acceptance of Offers

To accept an offer of a place, parents/guardians must:

- Confirm acceptance of the offer in writing by the date specified in the offer letter.
- Confirm that they accept the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Indicate whether they have accepted or are awaiting an offer from another school and provide any details required to support data-sharing obligations under the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.
- Failure to accept the offer by the stated deadline may result in the offer being withdrawn and the place offered to the next applicant on the waiting list.

Circumstances Where Offers May Not Be Made or May Be Withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made, or may be withdrawn, where:

- Information contained in the application form or supporting documentation is found to be false or misleading in a material way.
- The parent/guardian fails to confirm acceptance of the offer by the specified deadline.
- The parent/guardian or student (if aged 18 or over) refuses to accept the school's Code of Behaviour.
- The requirements for acceptance of an offer, as clearly set out in the offer letter, are not met.

Sharing of Data

In line with Section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, Cheeverstown School may share relevant admissions data with other schools, the NCSE and the Department of Education and Youth where necessary to facilitate the admission process, to prevent duplication of offers and to comply with statutory obligations.

All data will be processed in accordance with data protection legislation and the school's Data Protection Policy.

Admission to Other Years and In-Year Admission

Applications for admission to year groups other than the standard intake, or for in-year admission, will be considered subject to:

- Available places in the relevant class or age-appropriate grouping.
- The applicant meeting the eligibility criteria set out in this policy, including the requirement for an NCSE letter.

Where such applications arise, the oversubscription criteria will be applied if the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of places available.

Declaration: Non-Charging of Fees

No fees or payments are sought or charged as a condition of application or enrolment, other than those permitted under Department policy for specified categories of schools (e.g. fee-paying, boarding, PLC), none of which apply to Cheeverstown School.

Arrangements Regarding Religious Instruction

Cheeverstown School is non-denominational. Parents/guardians and students may opt out of any religious instruction or observance without any reduction in the length of the school day or any adverse impact on admission or participation in school life.

Reviews and Appeals

Where a parent/guardian or student (if aged 18 or over) is refused admission to Cheeverstown School, they have the right to request a review and, if necessary, to appeal the decision.

A request for review of the decision may be made to the Board of Management in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998 and within the timelines set by the Department of Education and Youth.

The Board of Management will conduct the review in line with procedures determined under Sections 29B and 29C of the Education Act 1998.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied following the review, they may appeal the decision to an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Youth under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, within the timelines and procedures set out by the Department.

This process ensures that all applicants have a fair opportunity to challenge admission decisions and that the school's procedures are transparent and compliant with legislation and Department guidance.

Policy Review and Consultation

This Admissions Policy has been reviewed and updated in line with Circular 0039/2025 and the associated Information Note on admission to special schools. Future technical amendments required by the Department or the NCSE (for example, updated eligibility criteria or designation wording) may be made following an appropriate, focused consultation process and will be published in advance of opening admissions for the relevant school year.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 29/04/26