

Tallaght Hospital School

■ Title

Admissions policy

■ Introductory Statement

The Board of Management of the National Children's Hospital School in line with the rules and regulations of the Department of Education and Science updated the previous enrolment policy in accordance with changes in the hospital and new requirements from the Department of Education and skills. The Patron is aware of the unique setting of the school and was therefore happy for us to update our policy for enrolment/admissions in a way we see fit.

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

This policy will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to anyone who requests it.

■ Rationale

To establish guidelines with regard to pupil enrolment, including:

- Prioritising of pupils.
- If, and when, a pupil may not access school.
- When restricted access may apply.
- Sibling access.
- Post-primary pupil enrolment.

■ Aims

- To revise previous policy to take into account the change in average pupils age attending and the inclusion of more long-term pupils.
- To provide an age-appropriate educational service.
- To streamline/timetable classes to suit individual pupil needs.
- To take into account Covid restrictions when creating a daily timetable for lessons.
- To be responsive to the educational needs of children in hospital.
- Enrol any pupil sufficiently well/medically fit and in full time education.
- Give priority to patients with an expected stay of 4days plus or have recurrent admissions (A school service will also be provided for children admitted for shorter stay).

■ Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Tallaght hospital School is a co-education Church of Ireland School under the Patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin and Bishop of Glendalough.

Tallaght hospital School is a hospital school, located within the Paediatric Department in Tallaght University Hospital. The school caters for both Primary and Second level pupils. School packs are also provided to pre-school pupils though they cannot attend the school.

We seek to express the beliefs and spiritual values of the Church of Ireland, among which are honesty, justice, fairness, respect, sensitivity to others and civic responsibility.

We endeavour:

- To minimise, as far as possible the interruption and disruption to the child's schooling by continuing education as normally as the child's medical condition and circumstances permit.
- To assist children with life limiting conditions and palliative care needs, who may never return to school, to continue to develop their potential and pursue normal life goals.
- To provide a balance of schoolwork and non-academic work to those patients dealing with mental health issues.
- To provide for all pupils an enriching and enjoyable experience which is suited to their age and individual needs and which helps prevent anxiety about school.
- To make education an integral component of this hospitals service.

■ Admission statement

Tallaght Hospital School will not discriminate in its admission of a pupil to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the pupil concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the pupil concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the pupil concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the pupil concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the pupil concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the pupil concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the pupil concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the pupil concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the pupil concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

■ Guidelines

Tallaght Hospital School follows the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Section 9 & 30 of the Education Act, 1998.

All pupils enrolled in the school are **encouraged** to participate in all aspects of the curriculum which includes the following subjects: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Music, Drama, SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and Physical Education (where appropriate).

As Tallaght hospital School is a hospital school, no pupil is required to attend school if they are not well. Once in the classroom they are encouraged to participate in all activities and all aspects of the curriculum, if appropriate.

1. Access

The school enrolment is open to all inpatient primary and post-primary pupils who are admitted to Tallaght University Hospital.

- Priority is given to long-term pupils and those with recurrent admissions.
- When possible, pupils who are unable to attend will be visited by the teacher at their bedside. An appropriate programme will be devised for that pupil.
- Due to the huge divergence in ability and age ranges, pupils will be catered for on an individual basis or small group basis but where possible, group lessons will be undertaken e.g. art, music and drama workshops, project work and themed lessons.
- We consider the needs of a diverse range of students and age groups and must take into account medical needs such as isolation, wheelchair access and emotional response.
- Access to the schoolroom will be subject to timetabling as appropriate, meeting the needs of pupils.
- No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accent, gender, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious /political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.

2. Infection control

Pupils may attend school at the discretion of the clinical nurse manager and/or staff nurse in charge. Health and safety and infection control issues may come to bear on acceptance of children from wards into the schoolroom.

Consultation with the Clinical nurse manager and staff nurses will be the basis for any decision to provide an alternative for those wishing to avail of the educational service.

3. Pupil(s) with additional needs

Tallaght hospital school has a variety of resources, books, and materials available to cater for pupils with additional needs e.g. height adjustable tables, sensory equipment, large print worksheets, fidget stools and toys.

We endeavour to be flexible in our teaching and approach and encourage pupils to come and visit the school first if they are unsure about attending for a lesson.

4. Religious Education

Due to the nature of the school and the varying backgrounds of the pupils that attend Tallaght hospital School daily, Religious Education will be taught when requested and where appropriate. No pupil will be refused religious lessons, similarly, it will not be compulsory for any pupil to engage in religious lessons.

When learning about different religions and cultures as a group, our focus will be on celebrating similarities and differences between cultures and religions rather than focusing on one religion and their beliefs.

5. Pupils from a Gaelscoil

Tallaght hospital school has a variety of resources, books and materials available to provide for Pupils that attend a Gaelscoil. They will be given an equal education through Irish.

6. Siblings of a pupil attending the hospital school.

Educational support may be offered to siblings of in-patients at the discretion of the principal (for long-term pupils only and in consultation with the Clinical nurse manager re any infection risk).

While family circumstances may lead to siblings of patients spending time on the wards, attendance in the hospital school is not encouraged as an *alternative to home school*. Each case will be examined individually.

7. Post-Primary pupils

Post-Primary pupils are encouraged to attend the hospital school to engage with curricular and other work (depending on their wellbeing and mental health)

When attending the hospital school, our goals for Post-Primary pupils are to;

- Identify strengths and weaknesses and provide curricular support in areas most needed (these needs can be identified by the teacher, pupil themselves, parents, liaison with the main school and hospital multi-disciplinary team involved with the pupil).
- Provide work/activities based on the needs of the pupil. This may be to focus on mindfulness activities and Art work instead of core subject work.
- Allow them to concentrate on 1 or 2 core subjects during hospitalisation if they choose (priority given to maths and Irish).
- Provide various online resources and ensure downloads are available to the pupils.
- Provide feedback on progress to pupil, parents and liaise with mainstream school (if appropriate).

- Gather work from their own school and provide a space for them to engage with this work.
- Provide exam preparation and support particularly during DES exam periods.
- Provide access to a wide range of post-primary textbooks and sample exam papers.
- Engage post-primary pupils in some activities outside of Junior/Leaving Cert courses being followed e.g. computer skills, Art, music, Word processing.
- Provide work, games and activities in their bedroom if required.

8. Short-term pupils

Short-term pupils that are in the hospital for 1-3 days will initially be given a school pack they can complete in their bedrooms and take home with them when they are leaving.

If there is space in the classroom and on the timetable, these pupils will be catered for and brought down to the classroom for a minimum of 30minutes a day. If they are unable to be brought to the school, there will be follow up visits to their room to discuss extra work/resources being dropped down.

■ Success Criteria

Adequate provision and priority of resources is made for long-term or repeat students. The success of this policy will be assessed in a comprehensive way by reference to student progress, pupil feedback, medical/nursing staff feedback, parents, and mainstream school, as appropriate. We will continue to monitor the enrolment of pupils and work will all of the hospital community to ensure equal access to education and resources is provided to all pupils.

■ Roles and Responsibility

Principal- To communicate to parents and pupils the Admissions policy of the school.
Board of Management- To review policy and support its implementation.
Hospital administration- To liaise with school management where enrolment issues arise.
Department of education and Skills- provision of departmental support and advice. Provision of review/evaluation opportunities.

■ Timeframe for Implementation

The revised policy will be implemented from October 2025.

■ Timeframe for Review

This policy will be updated as needed.
 Review September 2026.

■ Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the _____ of _____.

Signed: _____, (Chairperson, BOM)

Signed: _____, (Principal).

