



***St. Tolas N.S.***  
***Admissions Policy***



ADMISSIONS POLCY  
Roll No. 19205W  
School Patron: Bishop of Meath, Tom Deenihan

## **1. Introduction**

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.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 05/05/20. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Tola's National School admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

## **2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

St. Tola's National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Tola's National School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.



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### 3. Admissions Statement

St. Tola's National School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student 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.

St. Tola's N.S. will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when required to do so by the Council.

St. Tola's N.S., will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998.

#### All denominational schools

St. Tola's is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school

#### Schools with special education class(es)

St. Tola's is a school which has established 2 classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.



#### 4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

St. Tola's with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with ASD needs.

#### ENROLMENT APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR THE ASD UNIT

St. Tola's has a maximum capacity of six pupils in one class. In setting up the Unit, the BoM is committed to developing an educational setting which is focused on the needs of the pupils and enables learning to take place in a safe environment, in which pupils with ASD learn a range of skills that will facilitate their making a gradual transition into mainstream classes with their own age cohort. The name '*Gladioli and Blossoms*', were chosen to support a vision for the pupils' holistic and educational needs blooming in St.Tola's.

Parental involvement in the pupils' learning is encouraged and valued. It ensures consistency between the pupils' various learning environments.

The teaching methodologies employed in the Unit will be those that are deemed most appropriate to the individual pupil's learning needs.

#### **Criteria for Admission to the Unit:**

The total number of places in the Unit is six. If it is oversubscribed, places will be allocated on the criteria as listed in section 6, provided in the first instance that the applicant meets all of the following criteria:

- An applicant will not be enrolled in the Unit unless s/he is four years of age on or before the 1st September of the academic year for which the application is made.
- No student can be older than thirteen years of age during his/her last year in the Unit.
- A fully completed, signed and dated application form for enrolment has been submitted to the school by the Parents and a vacancy exists in the Unit.
- The applicant must have a primary diagnosis of a qualifying autism spectrum disorder and the applicant must submit a professional report which
  - confirms a diagnosis of a qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM IV/V or ICD 10) **and**
  - contains a recommendation to attend an ASD class **attached to a mainstream school**. Such a recommendation cannot be dated more than two years prior to the proposed admission date **and**
  - confirms that the diagnosis of a qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder was made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure.
- If the application form is not fully completed, and/or all the required reports have not been furnished, the application will be deemed incomplete. The Parents will be notified that the application will not be considered, nor a waiting list number allocated, until a complete application is submitted.
- When a complete application is submitted, the date and time of receipt are noted on the application form and an acknowledgement is sent indicating that the application has been allocated a waiting list based on the criteria as stated in section 6.



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- The Parents and the applicant are invited to a meeting with the ASD Unit coordinator and are encouraged to bring reports from the applicant's present educational setting to this meeting.
- The application will be assessed by the ASD Enrolment Advisory board
- In the event that the number of applicants seeking enrolment into the Unit exceeds the number of places available, names will be placed on a waiting list **in order of date** of the school receiving a fully completed eligible application.
- If offered a place, the Parents must confirm in writing within 10 calendar days that the place is being accepted. If this confirmation is not received within that time, the school will take it that the place is not being accepted and the place will be reallocated.
- If the applicant fulfils all of the enrolment criteria but is not offered a place due to lack of an available place, the Parents may opt to place the pupil's name on a waiting list. The waiting list will operate on the criteria stated in section 6, in respect of those parents/guardians who opt to place the student's name on the waiting list.
- The waiting list will be maintained for the duration of the academic year only, for which the application was initially made.

### Placement and Continuing Placement of a Pupil in the Unit

- Pupils will be "phased in" gradually to the Unit through a mutually agreed process between the school and the Parents.
- The individual needs of each pupil are constantly reviewed to ensure that the Unit is the appropriate setting to meet the pupil's needs. A review of each pupil's progress and his/her Individual Education Profile will be carried out in consultation with Parents and other professionals where necessary.
- The school reserves the right to review the pupil's progress at the end of each academic year to determine whether the Unit continues to be an appropriate placement for him/her.

### ASD Class Enrolment Advisory Board

- The Advisory Board consists of the school Principal, management staff and the teacher from the Unit. The decision as to the placement of an applicant in the Unit lies with the Principal.
- Places are allocated in the Unit on condition that the appropriate resources are provided and continue to be provided, by the National Council for Special Education ('NCSE') and the DES.

### Transition from the ASD Unit into Mainstream

Arrangements for pupils' integration into the mainstream will be made according to their level of need and attainments. School personnel will decide when inclusion/integration into a mainstream setting is appropriate. This may be at an age range above or below the pupil's age, but will be the class that is best suited to meet the pupil's needs and the one that is chronologically most appropriate.

## PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Pupils with special needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the DES and/or NCSE. In the event that the applicant has special educational needs, a copy of the student's



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medical/psychological reports and/or a professional assessment of the pupil's needs must be submitted, so that provision can be made for that pupil's welfare and educational progress.

## **5. Admission of Students**

The school shall admit each student seeking admission except where:

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him/her and that s/he shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

### **All denominational schools**

St. Tola's is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

### **School with special education class(es)**

The special class attached to St. Tola's provides an education exclusively for students ASD needs and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class

## **6. Oversubscription**

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the selection criteria in the order listed to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice.

### **Criteria used to prioritise applicants for Junior Infants for mainstream**

Where applications exceed the number of available places in Junior Infants, the available places will be allocated in the following order:

1. Siblings of pupils currently enrolled
2. Children living within the Parish
3. Children who live outside the Parish

### **Students tied for places**

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:



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1. Applicants' ages will determine the outcome i.e. places will be offered beginning with the oldest eligible applicant in the oversubscribed category and proceeding in descending order of age from oldest to youngest, until all available places have been filled.
2. If this process fails to offer a solution and two or more applicants remain tied for a place, the name/s will be drawn by lot.
3. Where twins are tied for the last available school place, both shall be admitted, by way of exception.

St. Tola's will accept a maximum of 30 pupils for enrolment for Junior Infants each year.

### Criteria used to prioritise applicants for special class(es)

Where applications exceed the number of available places, the available places will be allocated in the following order:

1. Existing pupils currently enrolled (priority to the eldest).
2. Siblings of existing pupils (priority to the eldest).
3. Children living within the Parish (priority to the eldest).
4. Children who live outside the Parish (priority on the basis of closest proximity to the school/eircode verification)

### Admission of Students to Junior Infants and applicants to special class(es)

The following conditions must be met for application for admission into Junior Infants:

- A fully completed enrolment application form, duly signed and dated, must be returned not later than the closing date.
- The official application form must be used. This is available for download from the school's website at [www.sttolasdelvin.com](http://www.sttolasdelvin.com) and/or in hard copy on request, from the school.
- A separate form must be used in respect of each child's application.
- The following documentation must accompany a fully completed, signed & dated application form, which must be submitted no later than the closing date in order for the application to be considered a **"complete application"**:
  - Copy of the applicant's birth certificate
  - Proof of address in the form of a utility bill in the name of one of the Parents, which must be dated no later than six months prior to the closing date.

If the application for admission is successful and the place has been accepted as outlined in this policy and the Annual Admission Notice, the pupil shall be enrolled as per his/her name on his/her official birth certificate.

### 7. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Admission to Schools Act, 2018, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) A student's prior attendance at a pre-school
- (b) Payment of fees or contributions to the school
- (c) A student's academic ability, skills or aptitude





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- (d) The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents
  - (e) A requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission
  - (f) A student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school (other than as outlined in the selection criteria at 5.2)
  - (g) The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the Annual Admission Notice.

## **8. Decisions on Applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Tola's National School will be based on the following:

- The school's admission policy
- The school's Annual Admission Notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in the Annual Admission Notice

Selection criteria not included in the school's admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in the school.

## **9. Notifying applicants of decisions**

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see [section 18](#) below for further details).

## **10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Tola's National School, you must indicate—

- (i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and
- (ii) whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.





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## 11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St. Tola's National School where:

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 9](#) above.

## 12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom:

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

## 13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St. Tola's National School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.



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Placement on the waiting list of St. Tola's National School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

#### **14. Late Applications**

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

#### **15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are in accordance with the procedures previously laid out in this policy.

- A fully completed enrolment application form, duly signed and dated. The official application form must be used. This is available for download from the school's website at [www.sttolasdelvin.com](http://www.sttolasdelvin.com) and/or in hard copy on request, from the school. A separate form must be used in respect of each child's application.
- The following documentation must accompany a fully completed, signed & dated application form;
  - Copy of the applicant's birth certificate
  - Proof of address in the form of a utility bill in the name of one of the Parents, which must be dated no later than six months prior to the closing date.
- Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within 21 days.
- If an applicant is successful, they must accept the placement in writing within 10 days.
- If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant.
- Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 18 below for further details).

The admission of these pupils is dependent also upon:

- The overall numbers in the school
- The number of children in a particular class grouping.



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The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are in accordance with the procedures previously laid out in this policy.

The admission of these pupils is dependent also upon:

- The overall numbers in the school
- The number of children in a particular class grouping.

## 16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The Board of St. Tola's National School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

## 17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the Board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

**Note:** Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.



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## Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1) (c) (ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

## Ratification of Policy

This policy was amended by the Board of Management on 14/12/2022

Signed Seamus Ó hÉanaigh Date: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
Fr. Seamus Heaney, Chairman of BOM.

Signed Eileen Smyth Date: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
Eileen Smyth, Principal.



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**St. Tola's N.S.**  
**ANNUAL ADMISSION NOTICE**  
in respect of admissions to the 2024/2025 school year

**Admission Policy and Application Form**

A copy of the school's **Admission Policy** and the **Application Form for Admission** for the 2024/2025 is available as follows:  
To download at: [www.sttolasdelvin.com](http://www.sttolasdelvin.com)  
On request: By emailing [office@sttolas.com](mailto:office@sttolas.com) or writing to: St. Tola's N.S., Killulagh, Delvin, Co. Westmeath. N91XH26

**PART 1 - Admissions to the 2024/2025 school year**

**Application and Decision Dates for admissions**

The following are the dates applicable for admission to Junior Infants.

The school will commence accepting applications for admission on	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> February</b>
The school shall cease accepting applications for admission on	<b>22<sup>ND</sup> February</b>
The date by which applicants will be notified of the decision on their application is	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> March</b>
The period within which applicants must confirm acceptance of an offer of admission is	<b>16<sup>TH</sup> March</b>

**Note: the school will consider and issue decisions on late applications in accordance with the school's admission policy.**

**Special Class Application and Decision Dates for admission to St. Tola's N.S.**

The following are the dates applicable for admission to the school's Special Class which caters for children with ASD.

The school will commence accepting applications for admission to the special class on	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> February</b>
The school shall cease accepting applications for admission to the special class on	<b>22<sup>ND</sup> February</b>
The date by which applicants will be notified of the decision on their application for admission to the special class is	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> March</b>
The period within which applicants must confirm acceptance of an offer of admission is	<b>16<sup>TH</sup> March</b>

**\*Failure to accept an offer within the prescribed period above may result in the offer being withdrawn**

**Number of places being made available in this coming school year.**

The number of places being made available in junior infants is	<b>28</b>
The number of residential places is (boarding schools only)	<b>0</b>
The number of non-residential places is (boarding schools only)	<b>0</b>
The number of places being made available in the special class* catering for children with ASD is	<b>2</b>



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### **Appendix to Admissions Policy of St. Tolas N.S.**

#### **Transfer from another school:**

Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the rules governing National Schools, as well as our own school's policy and local agreements with other schools. The Board of Management of St. Tolas has entered into a local agreement with the Board of Management of St. Ernan's N.S. and St. Patrick's N.S. Under this agreement, a pupil who is enrolled in any of these schools is not permitted to enroll in one of the other schools except in exceptional circumstances and only when the agreed procedure (listed below) has been followed. Information about these procedures can be obtained from the school principal. In the event of a school and family having engaged with TUSLA and the case is still under review, the transfer of the pupil will not be considered until the relevant parties are satisfied with the outcome.

#### **This amendment to the procedures was made in June 2013:**

Enrolment of children already attending either of the other local schools will only be considered where the pupil's parents have complied with the following procedure. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that every effort is made to resolve any difficulty or issue that may have arisen.

- The parents must make an appointment to meet their child's teacher to discuss the matter. If the matter remains unresolved, the parent must then make an appointment to meet with the Principal and class teacher with a view to resolving it.
- If these efforts are unsuccessful and the parents still wish to enroll the child in St. Tolas N.S., the BoM of the child's current school will consider the case on its merits.
- The Principal of St. Tola's N.S. will request a report from the Principal of the school the pupil wishes to leave, confirming that the above steps have been followed.

Only when both Principals are satisfied that the above procedure has been complied with, will the BoM of St. Tola's N.S. consider the application. If the BoM decides to accept the pupil, enrolment may only take place at the beginning of the new school term.

#### **The following addition was made in June 2015:**

If the BoM refuses a request to transfer to another school in the parish, the parent will have the option of appealing to an independent person (nominated by the three Boards of Management). This person will interview the parents and representatives of the BoM. If she/he considers that the reasons for wishing to transfer are sufficient and/or that the relationship between the parents and school has broken down, she/he can recommend that the application be granted. The recommendation of the Independent person will be binding. The process is to be completed within two weeks of the initial application to the Board of Management.