

Admission Policy of St. Joseph's NS

School Address: Templeraíne, Arklow, Co. Wicklow

Roll number: 17181B

School Patron: Archbishop of Dublin

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 23rd January 2023. 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. Joseph's NS 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.

Note:

Admission to St. Joseph's NS is subject to the student being not less than 4 years of age on the first day of September of the school year concerned (*Statutory Instruments No. 17 of 2020*)

Children must be enrolled in the primary school system in the September prior to their sixth birthday

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Joseph's NS is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin

'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 Joseph'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.

Our Mission Statement

- St. Joseph's N.S. is a co-educational Catholic primary school which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure environment where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.
- While St. Joseph's is a Catholic school it also gives due recognition to all other religions.
- St. Joseph's will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the personal and professional development of all the Staff.
- We express our care and commitment to the welfare of each child, acknowledging their integrity and celebrating each one's individuality.
- St. Joseph's encourages the involvement of parents through the Parents' Council and through home school contact. We recognise the important role of parents in the education of their children and encourage their active support.
- St. Joseph's will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils' respect for people and property and to encourage a spirit of independence and responsibility.
- St. Joseph's will promote a positive attitude to behaviour.

- St. Joseph's will promote gender equity at all levels among teachers, pupils and all other staff.

The school respects the following principles:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other educational need
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society

3. Admission Statement

St. Joseph's NS 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. Joseph's NS will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its 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 requested to do so by the Council. St. Joseph's NS will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

St. Joseph's NS 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Joseph's NS is a school which has established special classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provide 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 additional educational needs catered for in the special classes in our school

St. Joseph's NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established four classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism and one class for children with Mild General Learning Difficulties. Children with additional educational needs are also accommodated within mainstream Classes.

The four Autism Classes in St. Joseph's NS provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder while our MGLD Class provides education for pupils with Mild General Learning Difficulties. The school may refuse admission to these classes, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in these classes.

Where an application is made for a pupil for one of our Autism classes, the application must be accompanied by a psychologist's/psychiatrist's/ multi-disciplinary report that sets out:

- A diagnosis of Special Educational Needs - Autism (DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11)
- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s
- A clear professional recommendation for an Autism Class placement, including rationale as to why that placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs
- 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 class for Autism. **Please note that the closing date for parents to make applications to NCSE for this letter is 1st October 2025. Parents should contact the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) in their local area for more information on how to apply.**

Please Note: If a pupil's application does not meet these criteria, the school may refuse admission to the special class for Autism.

Where an application is made for a pupil in our MGLD class, the application must be accompanied by a psychologist's/psychiatrist's/ multi-disciplinary report that sets out:

- A diagnosis Special Educational Needs - Mild General Learning Difficulty (MGLD)
- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s
- A clear professional recommendation for a MGLD Class placement, including rationale as to why that placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs
- 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 class for MGLD.
Please note that the closing date for parents to make applications to NCSE for this letter is 1st October 2025. Parents should contact the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) in their local area for more information on how to apply.

Please Note: If a pupil's application does not meet these criteria, the school may refuse admission to the special class for MGLD.

5. Admission of Students

This 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 or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission to Mainstream Classes and Special Classes, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

Mainstream Classes

1. Children living in the parish of Avoca and siblings, step-siblings, foster siblings of children currently attending St. Joseph's NS
2. Children of current school staff (priority to eldest).
3. Children living in the Arklow Urban Area (priority to eldest).

Special Classes for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder / MGLD

In the event that the special classes in the school are oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission to special classes, apply the following selection criteria (where applicable) in the order listed below to those applications that

are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

1. Pupils who previously attended a special class in St. Joseph's NS, and following a period of full integration in a mainstream class in St. Joseph's NS, have been reassessed and have a recommendation of enrolment in either the autism class or MGLD class in line with Section 4 of this policy (priority to eldest).
2. Pupils who are enrolled in a mainstream class in St. Joseph's NS (priority to eldest).
3. Siblings, step-siblings, foster siblings of existing pupils in mainstream school (priority to eldest).
4. Children living within the parish of Avoca (priority to eldest).
5. Children living in the Arklow Urban area (priority to eldest).
6. Children living in County Wicklow (priority to eldest).

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above a lottery system by an independent person will apply.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, 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 or pre-school service, including naíonraí.
- (b) The payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school.
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; (other than in relation to a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned.
- (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 siblings of a student attending or having attended.
- (g) The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Joseph's NS will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see section 15 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 16 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our 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. Joseph's NS, 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.

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. Joseph's NS 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 10 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.

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. Joseph's NS 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.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Joseph's NS 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.

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 applications received for the special classes shall be added to the bottom of the waiting list for these classes.

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 as follows:

- Application Forms must be fully completed
- All reports must be submitted (where applicable)
- Admission will be subject to space being available in the appropriate class at the time of the application and/or at the proposed date of attending school.

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 as follows:

- When such students are moving to the area, the school is willing to accommodate students provided space is available in the appropriate class at the time of the application and/or at the proposed date of attending school.

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

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's NS 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 have 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 may request that the Board of Management 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.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of 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.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 22/09/2025 and is reviewed annually.

Mrs Maria Fitzmaurice (Chairperson)

Corrina Bailey (Principal)

Date:
