

## Admission Policy of St Joseph's N.S.



*Nurturing excellence in education*

**Tom Bellew Avenue,  
Dundalk,  
Co. Louth  
Roll number: 19673J**

**School Patron: Archbishop Eamon Martin**

### **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 **16/08/2020**. 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 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**

Archbishop Eamon Martin is the Patron of the school.

At present, the teaching staff is comprised of 27 mainstream Class Teachers, 1 Principal Teacher, 14 Support Teachers, 1 Home School Liaison Co-ordinator and 11.5 Special Needs Assistants. The full range of classes is taught in the school and classes

are of mixed gender. The school also includes a Language Class catering for up to 7 children, which is staffed by 1 Teacher and 1 Special Needs Assistant.

The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills and it operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department. The school Policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

Class starts at 8:50 a.m. and finishes at 2:30p.m. Infant Classes finish at 1.40 p.m.

### **Ethos**

The school provides religious education for pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Parents may request that children of different faiths/values do not participate in this religious instruction. In St. Joseph's any student who does not want to attend religious instruction, is encouraged to use the quiet space in the class library for reflection and to use the audio headphones, if required

The children in 2nd and 6th classes respectively are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. While respect is paid to all religions and/or value systems, as a Catholic school we are concerned with the education of the whole person, hence prominence is given to the quality of relationships as well as academic achievement. The RSE and Stay Safe Programmes are in operation in the school.

### **3. Admission Statement**

St Joseph's 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.

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

**The special ASD class** attached to St. Joseph's NS. will provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of autism which meets DSM-IV/V or ICD 10 criteria; and a recommendation from the diagnosing professional that the pupil has complex or severe learning needs that require the support of a special class setting and the reasons why this is the case'. 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.

**The Speech and language class** attached to St. Joseph's NS. provides an education exclusively for students with a speech and language disorder and the HSE/ language class admissions committee 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.

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

St Joseph's with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with specific speech and language disorder (SSLD).

St. Joseph's NS. is a school which is establishing a class with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills which provides which provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of autism which meets DSM-IV/V or ICD-10 criteria and a recommendation from the diagnosing professional that the pupil has complex or severe learning needs that require the support of a special class setting and the reasons why this is the case' a. The school may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act2018.

## 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

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

The special class attached to St Joseph's provides an education exclusively for students with specific speech and language disorder and the H.S.E 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.

In relation to admission to the special language class the process involves:

- Documented speech and language therapy from the HSE SLT personnel.
- SLT assessment indicating speech and language disorder.
- Psychological assessment
- School and pre-school reports.
- HSE / School admissions and review of all pertinent reports

### **Criteria for Admission into the ASD Class**

- A place must be available
- A full psychological assessment specifying Autism by a clinical/educational psychologist or psychiatrist, with a recommendation of placement in an ASD specific class.
- This report should be recent, within the last 24 months, and must include a diagnosis of autism which meets DSM-IV/V or ICD-10 criteria.
- A recommendation from the diagnosing professional that the pupil has complex or severe learning needs that require the support of a special class setting and the reasons why this is the case
- School Admission Application Form – fully completed, indicating that you wish your child to be enrolled in an ASD class
- A multi-disciplinary report is also valuable, and should be presented to the school at the earliest possible date.

*The maximum class size in the ASD class is six pupils.*

## 6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, 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:

### **Please note:**

**Applications will be accepted each year until 10<sup>th</sup> January of the relevant admission year. Priority will be given to Junior Infant children who are 4 years old by the 31<sup>st</sup> of August of that school year. Any remaining places will be offered to children who are 4 years old up to 30<sup>th</sup> of September of that school year.**

### **Junior Infant Admission Criteria**

If the number of children on the Waiting List exceeds the number of places available, the following prioritising criteria are used:

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Criterion</b>
<b>1</b>	Priority is given to siblings. If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
<b>2</b>	<b>Resident within 2 kilometres radius of school</b>
<b>3</b>	If space is still available, class numbers are completed from the Waiting List, which is compiled and ordered according to the date of the original application.

### **Criteria for Admission to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes**

Students must have completed at least one term in 5<sup>th</sup> class in the school before they can be admitted to 6<sup>th</sup> class.

The rationale behind this policy is that a significant number of children have emotional and behavioural difficulties at this age and maintaining consistency and stability is essential. This policy is reviewed annually.

**The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for available places in the Senior Infants to 5<sup>th</sup> classes.**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Criterion</b>
<b>1</b>	Priority is given to siblings., Places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
<b>2</b>	Resident within 2 kilometres radius of school
<b>3</b>	If space is still available, class numbers are completed from the Waiting List, which is compiled and ordered according to the date of the original application.

**The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of application for available places in the ASD Class**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Criterion</b>
<b>1</b>	Applicants who are enrolled in St. Joseph's mainstream school
<b>2</b>	Applicants with siblings currently enrolled in the school (including step-siblings, resident at the same address)
<b>3</b>	Applicants resident within a 2 kilometre radius
<b>4</b>	Applicants resident outside the 2 kilometre radius

All children enrolled are expected to comply with and support the school's Code of Behaviour, as well as the school's designated policies on Curriculum, Organisation and Management.

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

- Date when application was received
- Availability of a vacant place in a class

## **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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
  - (I) an early intervention class, or
  - (II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school; (other than in relation to a fee charging school or a plc or further education and training course run by a school in respect of those courses)
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; (other than in relation to:

- admission to (a) a special school or (b) 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 and/or
- admission to an Irish language school, in accordance with the provisions of section 62(9) of the act

(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;  
(other than in the case of admission to the residential element of a boarding school or to a plc or further education and training course run by a school)

(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, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

(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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## 8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St Joseph's 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 14](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#) 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 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 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 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 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.

## **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:

The Board of Management of St Joseph’s N.S. caps its intake number at 580. This is reviewed annually based on accommodation available to the 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:

**Criteria for Admission to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes**

Students **must** have completed at least one term in 5<sup>th</sup> class in the school before they can be admitted to 6<sup>th</sup> class.

The rationale behind this policy is that a significant number of children have emotional and behavioural difficulties at this age and maintaining consistency and stability is essential. This policy is reviewed annually.

**The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for available places in the Senior Infants to 5<sup>th</sup> classes.**

Priority	Criterion
1	Priority is given to siblings. If the class is oversubscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
2	Resident within 2 kilometres radius of school
3	If space is still available, class numbers are completed from the Waiting List, which is compiled and ordered according to the date of the original application.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St Joseph’s N.S. 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 pupil, 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 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.

### 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.

