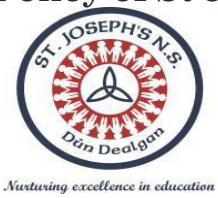
Admission Policy of St Joseph's N.S.



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 _____.(to be approved following consultation) 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.

St Joseph's NS will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating 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 patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board

under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

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 13.5 Special Needs Assistants. The full range of classes is taught in the school and classesare 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 1:30 p.m.

3. 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.

4. 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 (see eligibility criteria). 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, DLD-SSD 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

5. 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, DLD-SSD. (Circular 0024/2025)

St. Joseph's NS. is a school which has established 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 (see eligibility criteria) The school may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified. (Circular 0039/2025)

6. 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

Eligibility Criteria

Criteria for Admissions into the DLD-SSD Class

The child has a conclusive diagnosis by a Speech and Language Therapist of:

a) Developmental Language Disorder where:
   i. there is evidence of significant and pervasive needs evidenced by response to intervention and assessment over time including, use of speech and language assessment tools, observation in both clinical and social environments and assessment for risk factors and clinical markers and monitoring of responsiveness to intervention

AND

   ii. language scores at or below a standard score of 78 (-1.5 SD from the mean)[2]

AND / OR

b) Speech Sound Disorder (SSD) of unknown origin diagnosed by a Speech and Language Therapist where there is evidence of significant and pervasive impact of the SSD of unknown origin on learning, literacy and social relationships evidenced by response to intervention and assessment over time including, use of speech and language assessment tools and observation in both clinical and social environments.

AND

The child has complex or severe educational needs as a result of their DLD and/or SSD of unknown origin that are pervasive in nature and require the integrated and targeted educational and therapeutic supports of a special class for children with DLD/SSD. Supporting evidence should include:

c) Evidence that despite targeted and intensive therapeutic and educational supports, the child's DLD and/or SSD of unknown origin continues to impact on their learning, participation, socialisation and well-being in their current educational setting.

d) Evidence of engagement with therapy input including response to and impact of intervention across impairment, functioning and participation over time through Speech and Language Therapist review.

e) Education documentation from schools or early learning and care settings including Student Support Plans and/or Access and Inclusion Profiles detailing:

- Regular reviews of needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment and review with parents and educational staff

- Target-setting
- Evidence-informed intervention and review at key points.

Criteria for admissions into a special ASD class

Professional report(s) outlining:

- Diagnosis of special educational needs (*e.g. Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report*)

AND

- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports

AND

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

AND

- 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 *(insert category of special educational need e.g.* autism)
- The maximum class size in an ASD class is 6 pupils.

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 10th January of the relevant admission year. Priority will be given to Junior Infant children who are 4 years old on or before the date of commencement 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:

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 and children who are 4 years old up to 30th September of that school year.

Criteria for Admission to 6th Classes

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

Criteria for Admission from Senior Infants to 5th classes.

Priority	Criterion
1	Priority is given to siblings. 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.

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

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

The following selection process will be applied for places in the DLD-SSD class.

	Selection Process
1	The catchment area is the H.S.E's Louth community area
2	When the assessments confirm the criteria, the child's name is put forward for consideration by the *DLD-SSD Class Admissions Committee,* which comprises personnel from HSE, DES, School Principals, Specialist SLT, Class Teachers.
3	• When the assessments confirm the criteria, the child's name is put forward for consideration by the *DLD-SSD Class Admissions Committee* using Matrix (see appendix)
4	• Further reports are provided by play school leaders/teachers and other relevant medical reports are forwarded to the H.S.E. • The Specialist SLT co-ordinates all the reports and the School Principal and other members of the committee expect to receive these reports two weeks before the Admissions Meeting. • These reports include an up to date SLT report and a priority rating scale filled in by the child's SLT and Specialist SLT as well as a preschool or school report. Any other relevant reports are included.
5	• The committee selects those children who present with the greatest need for placement on the basis of agreed criteria including the nature and severity of the language disorder and/or speech. • Professional judgement is also applied to the priority rating scale and the allocation of placement is dependent on the consensus of the local DLD-SSD Class committee. • Where two children present with the same rating on the scale, details of choice will be recorded to indicate the basis for selection. • In the event of the quota of places not being filled due to parents declining a place, the child not meeting the criteria or insufficient number of new referrals, an additional Admission's meeting is set up at the earliest convenience. • If the seventh placement is not filled, the D.E.S. has made provision that the place can be offered to a child who does not meet the full criteria for a period of one year on a concessionary basis, with consensus from the local DLD-SSD Class committee. (Circular 38/07) • Where the number of children referred exceeds the number of places available, the child may be referred the following year, if appropriate. • A prioritisation matrix is available to assist in the prioritisation of places (see Appendix A for prioritisation matrix).

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.

1. What will not be considered or taken into account for admission to any class in St Joseph's NS.

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:

(i) 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

(ii) admission to an Irish language school, in accordance with the provisions of section 62(9) of the act

(iii) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;

(iv) 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)

(v) 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).

(vi) 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 31st January 2025 only).

2. 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.

3. 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).

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

	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.

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

This rule applies to <u>all</u> 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.

11. 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.

12. 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 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 575. This is reviewed annually based on accommodation available to the school

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 ratified by the B.O.M in **May 2017** and it will be reviewed in **October 2020.**

The draft policy was reviewed and by the B.O.M in June 2020 and approved by the Patron.

The Board of Management of St Joseph's N.S. reserves the right, in consultation with the education partners to review and modify the Admission Policy as necessary.

Revised and amended by Board of Management in April 2018.

Revised and Amended by Board of Management in December 2018.

Revised and amended by Board of Management on 8th September 2020

Amended by the Board of Management on 6th January 2023

Amended by the Board of Management on 3rd December 2024.

Revised and amended by Board of Management September 2025

Approved by Patron September 2025

Ratified by Board of Management 30th September 2025

John Farrell

Chairperson, B.O.M

Date: 30/09/2025

Dr. Roz Morris

Principal

Date: 30/09/2025

APPENDIX

Decision-Making Matrix for Admissions Committees for Development Language Disorder (DLD) / Speech Sound Disorder (SSD) classes.

Name: _____ **Date of Birth** _____

Address: _____ **School:** _____

_____ **Class:** _____

Eircode: _____

Parents Name: _____ **Tel No:** _____

Parents Name: _____ **Tel No:** _____

Admission Criteria	**Supporting Evidence to consider (one or more of these documents)**	**Scoring**	
Conclusive diagnosis of DLD/severe SSD by SLT	• Speech and Language Therapy Report with assessments completed within 6 months of the application deadline		Conclusive diagnosis of DLD / severe SSD of unknown origin given by SLT
			Conclusive diagnosis of DLD / severe SSD not given by SLT
Significant and pervasive needs arising from DLD / severe SSD. (input from SLT, parent and school)	• Speech and Language Therapy Report with assessments completed within 6 months of the application deadline.		The child has significant and pervasive needs arising from their DLD / severe SSD that impacts multiple contexts
			The child has needs arising from their DLD/ severe SSD, but they are not significant or pervasive **or** do not cross multiple contexts.
			There is no evidence of significant and pervasive needs resulting from the child's diagnosis of DLD / severe SSD across contexts.
Complex or severe and ongoing educational needs arising from DLD and / or severe SSD	• School Support Plans • Access and Inclusion Profile • School report • Parent report • Other professional reports (if available and applicable)		The child's needs would be best met in a specialised DLD / severe SSD class as they require integrated educational and therapeutic support to best meet their educational needs
			The child's needs are / could be met in mainstream school with additional supports e.g. SET support, SNA support.
			The child is doing well in mainstream school academically and socially.

Admission Criteria	Supporting Evidence to consider (one or more of these documents)	Scoring	
Response to focused SLT intervention and support over time	• Speech and Language Therapy report with assessments completed within 6 months of the application deadline		The child has made minimal progress in impairment, functioning and participation and continues to have severe and complex educational needs despite focused SLT intervention and support over time
			The child has made progress in impairment, functioning and participation but continues to have educational needs despite focused SLT intervention and support over time.
			The child has made progress in impairment, functioning and participation which has positively impacted their educational engagement and achievement following focused SLT intervention and support over time. **The child has not had sufficient input or time to make progress or to reasonably identify how they respond to intervention.**
Associated Needs (reported by SLT school, Parents and / or child)	• SLT Report • School Report • Parent Report • Psychology Report (if applicable) • Occupational Therapy Report (if available) • Paediatric Report (if available) • CAMHS Report (if available)		Child presents with needs associated with DLD / severe SSD, that are functionally impacting their participation and engagement in learning and socialisation
			Child presents with needs, but these are not associated with DLD / severe SSD **Or** Child does not present with needs associated with DLD / severe SSD, that are functionally impacting their participation and engagement in learning and socialisation.
DLD class is the most suitable and sustainable school setting for this child.	• SLT report • School report • Parent report • Other professional reports (if applicable)		Placement in the DLD/SSD class is the most sustainable and suitable provision for the child.
			Placement in the DLD/SLD class is a suitable provision for the child but there are factors which indicate it might be hard to sustain for the child / family.
			Placement in the DLD/SSD class is not the most suitable or sustainable educational placement for the child
Notes:			