

Admission Policy of St. Joseph's National School, Woodford

School Address: Woodford, Loughrea, Co. Galway

Roll number: 15958F

School Patron/s: Michael Duignan, Bishop of Clonfert

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 1st September 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 National School'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

The School is a Roman Catholic School which aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person - intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and others. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The school provides religious education for Roman Catholic pupils in accordance with the practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of Roman Catholic pupils in the Roman Catholic Faith.

The School caters for classes from junior infants to sixth class and it also has a class for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (“ASD Class”).

The School is committed to the holistic education of the child; endeavouring to ensure that each child achieves his/her full potential.

Equality of access in accordance with the Policy is the core value that determines enrolment of pupils in the School.

Within the context and parameters of the relevant legislation outlined above, Department of Education & Skills (“DES”) regulations, the rights of the Patron and the funding and resources available, the School will support and foster those aforementioned principles and philosophies.

3. Admission Statement

St. Joseph’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. Joseph’s National School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

St. Joseph’s National School 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 a Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Joseph’s National School is a school which has established a class, 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. Joseph's National School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

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

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

The special class attached to St. Joseph's National School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 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. The school may also refuse admission to the ASD class if maximum capacity for the class has been reached. The ASD class has a maximum capacity of 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:

Where the School is oversubscribed in any particular year, it will compile a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to the intake group were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed. The School will use this list to fill any vacancies arising during the school year in question only.

The selection criteria for applications will apply in the following order:

- a) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school
- b) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

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:

Priority will be given to the applicant whose primary residence is located within the closest distance to St. Joseph's National School. This distance is to be determined through use of the software Google Maps, calculating the distance in kilometres between the Eircodes of the School and the applicant's primary residence.

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:
 - admission 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 (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, the 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 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

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

- Our 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 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 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.

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 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 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 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.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Joseph'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.

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.

An applicant will be enrolled in an age appropriate class once the following criteria have been met:

- The official application is fully completed, dated and signed by the Parents.
- All requested documentation is furnished i.e. a copy of the applicant's birth certificate. Failure to submit a birth certificate will mean that the application is incomplete.
- Applications which are incomplete, not signed, not dated and/or do not include the required documentation will not be accepted. A place will not be offered nor will such applicants be placed on a waiting list.
- A separate form must be completed for each applicant.
- The availability of a place, in a specific/age appropriate class. This will be determined in the context of the overall number of pupils which the School can accommodate at the time the application is made.

- Submitting inaccurate information on an application form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void ab initio. Where a place has been offered, this will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn and it being reallocated. In the case of placement on a waiting list, it will result in removal from the waiting list.
- Written notification of the decision regarding the application will be issued to Parents within 21 calendar days of receipt of the fully completed, signed and dated application form.

Parents of applicants who have been offered a place must inform the School by completing and returning an enrolment form within [20] calendar days. Failure to do so will result in the place being forfeited and/or it being reallocated.

If the application for enrolment is successful and the place has been accepted as outlined above, the successful applicant shall be enrolled as per his/her name on his/her official birth certificate.

Applicants who are not successful in securing a place will be placed on a waiting list in date order of receipt of completed application. A place on the waiting list expires at the end of the academic year for which the application was made.

Where the applicant is transferring from another school, the Parents must inform the School of the reason for the transfer and the School reserves the right to contact the applicant's school/former school in this regard.

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.

The following criteria apply to an application for enrolment during the academic year including students that transfer from another school:

- i. Overall capacity of the School.
- ii. That current optimum arrangements of pupils for teaching and learning purposes are maintained.
- iii. That a place exists in the relevant class/es/an age appropriate class, taking all the relevant circumstances into account, e.g. needs of the existing pupils, the overall number of pupils that the School can accommodate at the time the application is made, the presence of pupils with special education needs and/or behavioural needs, physical space etc.

An applicant will be enrolled in an age appropriate class once the following criteria have been met:

- The official application is fully completed, dated and signed by the Parents.
- All requested documentation is furnished i.e. a copy of the applicant's birth certificate. Failure to submit a birth certificate will mean that the application is incomplete.
- Applications which are incomplete, not signed, not dated and/or do not include the required documentation will not be accepted. A place will not be offered nor will such applicants be placed on a waiting list.
- A separate form must be completed for each applicant.
- The availability of a place, in a specific/age appropriate class. This will be determined in the context of the overall number of pupils which the School can accommodate at the time the application is made.
- Submitting inaccurate information on an application form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void ab initio. Where a place has been offered, this will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn and it being reallocated. In the case

of placement on a waiting list, it will result in removal from the waiting list.

- Written notification of the decision regarding the application will be issued to Parents within 21 calendar days of receipt of the fully completed, signed and dated application form.

Parents of applicants who have been offered a place must inform the School by completing and returning an enrolment form within [20] calendar days. Failure to do so will result in the place being forfeited and/or it being reallocated.

If the application for enrolment is successful and the place has been accepted as outlined above, the successful applicant shall be enrolled as per his/her name on his/her official birth certificate.

Applicants who are not successful in securing a place will be placed on a waiting list in date order of receipt of completed application. A place on the waiting list expires at the end of the academic year for which the application was made.

Where the applicant is transferring from another school, the Parents must inform the School of the reason for the transfer and the School reserves the right to contact the applicant's school/former school in this regard.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Joseph'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

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

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:

The child will remain in the classroom during each period of religious instruction, in consultation with the parent(s). During this time, the child will be assigned additional work by the class teacher in a subject area, for example Mathematics, English, and Gaeilge. Work given will align with the Primary School Curriculum, as outlined by the DES.

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 within three weeks of the refusal notice being issued, 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 within three weeks of the refusal notice being issued, 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, 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.