

Enrolment Policy

Introduction

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's National School hereby sets out its Enrolment and Admission Policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, and the Board trusts that by so doing, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Principal Teacher will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this policy.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management of the school.

General Information:

Name of school: St. Joseph's N.S.

Address: Rathwire Lower, Killucan, Co. Westmeath. N91 E402

Telephone: 044-9374591

E-mail: rathwirens@eircom.net

Roll Number: 18640m

General School Information

His Lordship Bishop Tom Deenihan is the Patron of the school which is situated in the parish of Killucan.

At present, the teaching staff is comprised of 1 Principal Teacher, 10 mainstream class Teachers, 2 Special Class Teachers in our ASD unit, and 6 full day SNAs, 4 Infant day SNA's and 1 SNA employed for 16 hours per week. The full range of classes is taught in the school and classes are of mixed gender. The school also includes a 2 classroom Autism Unit catering for up to 12 children, which is staffed by 2 Teachers and 4 Special Needs Assistants.

The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science 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 9.30 a.m. and finishes at 3.10 p.m. Infant Classes finish at 2.10 p.m.

Rationale

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school

- To make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with the Ethos, the mission Statement of the school and legislative requirements
- To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available to it and
- To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school

Legal Framework

Section 9 (j) of the Education Act 1998 specifies, that "A recognised school shall Subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school".

Section 15 (2) (d) states the Board of Management shall “publish The policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school and ensure that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents’ choice are respected”.

Section 27 (1) states that “A board shall establish and maintain procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school” and (2) that “the procedures established and maintained under subsection (1) shall facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the School having regard to the age and experience of the students, in association with their parents and teachers”.

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 [Section 19 (1)] requires that a Board of Management shall not refuse to admit a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the school’s Admission Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the Board of Management, shall as soon as possible (but no later than 21 days) after receiving such information “make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof”

The Equal Status Act, 2000 [Sections 5 & 7 (2)] prohibits discrimination on the grounds of “gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling Community” regarding admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction. There are limited exceptions regarding single-sex schools and schools promoting particular religious’ values [Section 7 (3)].

Goals

The school shall have in place appropriate channels of communication and procedures

- To inform parents about the school, its programmes, activities, and procedures
- To enable applications for admission to the school to be handled in an open, transparent manner
- To put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered
- To ensure that these criteria are informed by our Ethos, our Mission Statement & current legislation
- To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application

Context, Resources, School Organisation & Curriculum

The school supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school. The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parent’s choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of any applicant or student. It will make every effort to secure those resources – where the resources cannot be secured the school may refuse admission. The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil – teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department from time to time.

The capacity of the school to implement its desired curriculum, its broad range of educational programmes, its breadth of extra-curricular activities, its school plan and

policies are dependent on the resources it receives. Consequently, in determining its activities and programme for any school year the school must have due regard to the teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

Roles and responsibilities in developing and implementing this policy:

Roles of Board of Management

- To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementations and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- To decide on appeals by parents or students with respect to any decision(s) made by the Principal/Board.
- To prepare (and submit to the Education Welfare Board) a statement of Strategies regarding Attendance. The Statement of Strategy will have regard to guidelines issued by the Education Welfare Board and will set out the measures the Board of Management proposes to adopt
 - a) For the purposes of fostering and appreciation of learning among students attending the school and
 - b) Encouraging regular attendance at the school on the part of all students

Role of the Principal

- To formulate draft policy in consultation with the teaching staff, students, parents and Board of Management.
- To monitor its implementation and to ensure that it is reviewed by the review date where practicable
- To implement the policy and to support other teaching staff in their implementation of the policy
- To apply for and acquire such resources as are available in accordance with government policies
- To ensure, within the constraints of available resources, that alternative programmes are devised where necessary and practicable to meet the needs of students
- To appraise the policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate
- To ensure a register of all students attending the school is established and maintained
- To ensure that a record of attendance or non-attendance is maintained for each student registered at this school and, in the case of non-attendance, the reason for same
- Prior to registering a child, to provide the parents of an applicant with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and ensure that the parent confirm in writing their acceptance of the Code of an assurance that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code by the child
- To provide, on request, to any parent of a child registered in the school with a copy of the Code of Behaviour
- Where a child is refused admission, to advise the parents of their right of appeal to the Trustees and the Department of Education setting out Title and Address of each and advising of time limits

Role of Teaching staff

- To co-operate with the implementation of this policy
- To take the needs of all students into account in the way in which they select textbooks, plan and teach their lessons and conduct assessments
- To keep parents informed through the regular Parent / Teacher Meetings and School Reports and by meeting parents from time to time as required.
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate

Role of Parents

- To support the policy and to co-operate fully with the school in its implementation
- To bring to the attention of the school authorities any concern they may have in relation to the school's provision for the educational needs of their child
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate

Policy Considerations

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's National School reserves the right of admission if such admissions contravene Departmental guidelines on class size.

Junior and Senior Infant classes shall not exceed 27 pupils.

First to Sixth Classes shall not exceed 30 pupils.

The school will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, special education needs, disability, traveler status, refugee status, political or religious beliefs, family or social circumstances, provided the necessary supports are in place in the school.

The school will maintain a list of refused applicants for each class, their place on that list having been determined under the criteria outlined.

The Board of Management respects parental choice in relation to enrolment, provided the enrolment criteria are fulfilled.

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's National School, in its Policy of Admissions/Enrolment, respects the rights of the existing school community and the children already enrolled. Consequently, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each class, bearing in mind:

- Integration of children from Autistic Unit to Mainstream Classes
- Health & Safety Concerns regarding Staff and Children
- Available classroom space
- Possibility of multi-grade classes
- Educational needs of the children
- Presence of children with special needs
- Department of Education & Science class size directives
- Appropriate Supports and Resources are available
- Time of school year

Procedures – Application, Enrolment Criteria & Decision / Appeals

- Failure to fully complete forms may result in refusal to admit a student.
- Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage
- In applying the criteria for enrolment, the school will take into account limitations in the size of classes

Admission to the school is, of course, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources, and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission. Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources-where the resources cannot be secured, the school reserves the unfettered right to refuse admission. **It is the responsibility of parents / guardians of any child to inform the school of any such needs on the enrolment application form for the child's own welfare.** In this context the school authorities will have equal regard for the welfare of all the students and their right to an education in an atmosphere that is not detrimental to their physical, emotional, moral, social or intellectual development. **Failure to fully complete the application form, failure to supply any relevant information requested by the school or failure to make reasonable arrangements to meet with the school authorities to discuss the application may result in a child being refused admission to the school.**

Children with Special Needs

Children with Special Needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Science. In the event of an application for a child with special needs, the Board will request a copy of the child's medical/psychological reports or a professional or a professional assessment of the child's needs. In exceptional circumstances the Board reserves the right to refuse enrolment where it deems that: (i) The presence of the applicant in the school would impede the education of other pupils (each child has a right to an education without infringement) or would pose a threat to the safety of staff and/or students **OR** (ii) The applicant's needs are such that, even with additional resources, the school could not meet their needs or provide an appropriate education for them.

Application for immediate admission in the current school year

- Application forms are available from the school secretary or from the school's website www.rathwirens.ie- the school encourages online applications
- Please note that these are applications for enrolment and submitting of forms does not guarantee an offer of placement
- Failure to fully complete forms will result in refusal to admit the applicant

Junior Infant Enrolment Procedure

- The registration process is initiated on receipt by the school of a completed application form.
- This may be done online or by downloading/collecting a hard copy and returning to the school.

- Hard copy forms must be signed and dated by one or both parents or guardians. The form will be date stamped on receipt by the school, and is attached as appendix 1 to this policy.
- On line applications for enrolment must be filled in completely and submitted to the school through our school website.
- Both online and hard copy applications must be returned between 9am Monday 28th of January and 3pm Friday 8th of February 2019.

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- Entry in the School Record of Applications means that an application will be considered in early March of the relevant enrolment year, and will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria outlined in this policy, and should not be considered as confirmation of a place received in that class.
- Following this evaluation, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board, listing proposed enrolments for the forthcoming year.
- Once an enrolment list is approved by the Board, all applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome, and if refused admission will be notified of their entitlement to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
- Parents of successful applicants will then fill in a registration form including a consent form to complete enrolment.

Please note:

There is a defined registration period to be agreed by the BoM each year. This year’s registration period is from Monday 28th of January until Friday 8th February at 3pm. Other pupils may be enrolled during the year. The Board of Management strongly recommends that applicant children are at least four years of age on or before April 30th of the school commencement year.

Junior Infant Enrolment Criteria

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

- i. **Brothers and sisters of children in the school and the children of staff who are working in a full time capacity in the school.**
- ii. **All other children who live within the Killucan Parish boundary.**
- iii. **All remaining applicants based on age- preference will be given to the oldest children first**

These criteria are in line with the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018.

Criteria for Enrolment to SI to 6th Classes

The same criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for available places in the Senior Infants to 6 classes.

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.

Appeal Procedures

Parents who disagree with an enrolment decision may appeal to the School Board of Management. A letter stating the reason for the appeal should be forwarded to the Chairperson within **seven working days** of receiving the letter of refusal. The appeal will be discussed at a Board meeting and a final decision issued within **twenty-one working days**. If unhappy with the result of this internal appeal, parents may then appeal to the Department of Education and Skills on the official *Section 29 Appeal Application Form*. This application must be submitted to the Department **within 42 days** of receipt of the final decision of the Board of Management.

Evaluation

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the Policy and review and amend the Policy as required, with particular emphasis placed upon

- Effective management placed on application process
- Clarity and transparency relating to the process
- Applicants informed in good time re the status of their application, particularly in the case of refusal to enrol
- Positive Parental feedback

Monitoring Procedures

The implementations of this policy will be monitored by the Board of Management at the appropriate time. It will also be referred by the Principal for consideration by the full staff at the same time. The Principal will report to the Board of Management regarding the process of enrolment in February each year and regularly thereafter until enrolment is complete. Where the Principal refuses admission to any applicant, by the authority delegated to him by the Board in line with this policy, any such refusal shall be communicated to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

Review Procedure

This policy will be reviewed annually by the full staff and Board of Management. Final dates for applications will be reviewed annually and will be posted on the school website.

Ratification

This Enrolment Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of BoM

Signed: _____
Principal/Secretary to the BoM

Date: _____

Date: _____