

St. John's Parochial School

Enrolment and Retention policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Admissions Policy (the '**Policy**') for **St. John's Parochial School** (the '**School**') has been devised in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Equal Status legislation, the relevant sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, directives of the School's Patron and following consultation with the School community.
- 1.2 In this Policy, any reference to parents is to be taken as including reference to guardians, any reference to child is to be taken to include a child who has been adopted or fostered, any reference to siblings is to be taken as including reference to step siblings and foster siblings.

2. General Information

- 2.1 While recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in a school of their choice, the Board of Management (the '**Board**') reserves the right to determine maximum school and class size capacity, in order to ensure the safety and educational needs of students.
- 2.2 In determining the level of admissions, the Board shall take account of Department of Education & Skills ('**DES**') regulations/circulars in relation to staffing, class size and pupil teacher ratios; health and safety requirements, including, for example, traffic restrictions; it shall also have regard to issues such as physical space, multi-grade classes, the presence of pupils with special educational and/or behavioural needs, the number of pupils expected to leave the school, the size of classrooms/play areas/school premises, the deployment of teachers and the resources of the School.

3. Notification of Intention to Apply Form

- 3.1 Those intending to apply for enrolment of a student in the School (the "**Intending Applicant**") should contact the School and request a copy of the Notification of Intention to Apply Form. Submission of the Notification of Intention to Apply Form does not offer any priority whatsoever to the Intending Applicant nor does it in any way guarantee a place for him/her either for the term and year requested nor for any other term or year.
- 3.2 If the intention is to seek to enrol a child in less than 21 days, an Application Form should be requested and there will have to be full compliance with this Policy in terms of the application.
- 3.3 Those who have returned a Notification of Intention to Apply Form will be sent an Application Form in the proposed year of proposed enrolment in the School.

4. Applications for Admissions

- 4.1 All applications for a place in the School shall be submitted to the School Principal on the approved Application Form. An Ethos statement and Code of Behaviour will be furnished to each Applicant with a copy of the Application Form at the appropriate time, in advance of the Admissions Application period.

Only those Application Forms that have been completed in full, signed, dated, accompanied by relevant supporting documentation will be considered by the Board

- 4.2 An Application Form must be accompanied by
- (i) A birth certificate for the student in respect to whom the application has been made (the “**Applicant Student**”)
 - (ii) Proof of address in the form of a utility bill in the Applicant’s name (or in one of the Applicant’s names where there is more than one Applicant),
 - (iii) Statement confirming that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion, where applicable as outlined below
 - (iv) Evidence to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion, where applicable, as outlined below.
- 4.3 It should be noted that submission of an Application Form does not confer a right to admission nor does it guarantee a place in the School.
- 4.4 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, the place being reallocated and the Applicant Student being placed last on the waiting list.
- 4.5 Applicant Students, in respect of whom applications are made for junior infants, must have attained their 4th birthday (or older if applicable) no later than the first school day in the school year in respect of which the application for enrolment is made.

5. Consideration of the Applications

- 5.1 The Board having considered the applications, will issue its decisions in writing within 21 days.
- 5.2 Waiting lists for Applicant Students, only apply for the school year in respect of which the application for enrolment was made and do not carry forward to subsequent years.
- 5.3 Applicants who have been offered a place must inform the School, by completing and returning the admissions acceptance from within 21 calendar days of being offered a place. Failure to do so within this timeframe will result in the place being forfeited and being reallocated.
- 5.4 Any contact with and/or lobbying of school personnel and/or board members regarding an application for admission will automatically disqualify the applicant and a place will not be offered.
- 5.5 The foregoing conditions are subject to internal review from time to time and may be changed pursuant to other factors including DES/Patron requirements, changes in legislation etc.

6. Priority

- 6.1 St. John’s Parochial School is a Church of Ireland school. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, the priority categories below, which are listed in order of priority, are used to determine the priority given to applications in the descending order outlined below from (a) to (d), as follows:

- (a) **Priority Category 1:** An Applicant Student who is a member of the Church of Ireland or a Protestant reformed church or is a member of a minority religion which has the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to the programme of religious instruction/education which is provided in the school and who lives within the boundary of Tralee Union of Parishes.
- (b) **Priority Category 2:** An Applicant Student who is a sibling of a pupil currently attending the school.
- (c) **Priority Category 3:** An Applicant Student who lives within a 20 km radius of the School and who complies with the terms of this Policy
- (d) **Priority Category 4:** All other Applicant Students who comply with the terms of this Policy

In respect of Priority categories 1 and 2 above, the Applicant must provide the following documentation with the application form in order for the application to be complete, as the School must satisfy itself that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and that it provides a programme of religious instruction or religious education which is of the same religious ethos as, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

- (i) a statement from the Applicant confirming (i) that the Applicant Student is a member of a minority religion and (ii) that the Applicant wishes the Applicant Student to be educated in a school that provides a programme of religious instruction/education which is of the same religious ethos, or a similar religious ethos to, the religious ethos of the minority religion of the Applicant Student.

and

- (ii) evidence from the Applicant to support the statement that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion. This evidence will consist of:
 - a letter from the relevant religious leader confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - the signature and stamp of the relevant Church leader on the application form confirming, that the Applicant Student is a member of the minority religion or
 - a baptismal record issued by the relevant minority religion which confirms that the Applicant Student has been baptised as a member of the minority religion.

It is to be noted that where oversubscription occurs in any one of the above priority categories, priority will be given within the priority category (and only in that priority category) to Applicant Students, who have siblings currently enrolled in the School (“Sibling Applicant Students”). Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such a priority category, exceeds the available number of places, the remaining places will be allocated to Sibling Applicant Students using a lottery system i.e. drawing of names. Where the number of Sibling Applicant Students in such priority category does not exceed the number places available, the remaining places in this category will be allocated using a lottery system. i.e. drawing of names.

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Where the Applicant Students in a category are not successful in achieving a place, their names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which such names were drawn in the category. Applicants will be informed of the Applicant Student's place on the waiting list as it applies in the particular priority category.

7. Refusal to Enrol

- 7.1 The School reserves the right to refuse enrolment where an Applicant does not comply with the terms of this Policy.
- 7.2 In exceptional circumstances, the School reserves the right to refuse enrolment where:
 - i. The Applicant Student has special needs such that, even with additional resources being made available from the DES/NCSE, the School cannot meet such needs and/or provide the Applicant Student with an appropriate education;
 - ii. The Applicant Student poses unacceptable risk(s) to other pupils, staff and/or school property.
- 7.3 Applicants refused under any of the above criteria will be advised of their right to appeal the Board's decision as outlined below.

8. Appeals Procedure

- 8.1 Applicants who are unhappy with an enrolment decision may appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the DES on the official Section 29 Appeal Application Form which can be downloaded from www.education.ie. This appeal must be submitted to the DES within 42 days of receipt of the decision of the Board to refuse enrolment.

9. Retention

- 9.1 The Board of Management of St. John's Parochial School has set out its retention policy in accordance with the provisions of DES Circular 32/03
- 9.2 The Primary School curriculum is designed as an eight year course, including a two year infant cycle followed by six years in standards from first to sixth, with children progressing to the next grade at the end of each school year. The primary curriculum is flexible and child-centred, and can be adapted to meet children's needs.
- 9.3 The Department is providing considerable support for pupils with learning difficulties in schools. Support teachers, special needs assistants and a wide range of resources under the various schemes for schools in areas designated as disadvantaged are among the forms of provision allocated to schools for these

pupils. The level of provision available should enable pupils to make progress in keeping with their needs and abilities and to move consecutively through the different class levels in the school along with their peers

9.4 Under St John's Parochial School policy, children should only be allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. An additional grade level should not operate through the retention of all or a substantial number of pupils at a grade level.

9.5 In such exceptional circumstances a Principal teacher, following consultation with the learning support teacher and class teacher and parent(s) may conclude that a pupil would benefit educationally by repeating a grade level.

9.6 No pupil should repeat a grade more than once in a primary school. If a child has repeated one grade in St. John's Parochial School, they will not be entitled to repeat another.

10. Appeals Procedure

10.1 Applicants who are unhappy with the school's decision, on the retention or otherwise, of a pupil may appeal this decision in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, within 7 days.

11. Ratification and Review

11.1 This policy was reviewed by the Chairperson of the Parents Association before ratification by Board of Management

11.2 This Policy was ratified by the Board on 1st April 2019 and follows guidelines issued by the Patron in respect of admissions.

11.3 This Enrolment Policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board.

Signed: David Toth Date: 12th June 2019.

Chairperson

Signed: Patricia Fitzell Date: 12/6/19.

Acting Principal

Signed: Heidi Giles Date: 7/11/19

Chairperson, Parents Association