



# **St. Joseph's Special School**

Castletymon Road, Balrothery, Tallaght. Dublin 24 01 451 5961 admin@sjss.ie www.sjss.ie

Registered Charity Number: 20140210 Roll Number: 19520H

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## **St Joseph's Special School Admission Policy**



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## **1. Introduction**

This Admission Policy (the "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 [date]. 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 Special School (the "school") 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**

St. Joseph's Special School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church which aims at promoting:

- a) The full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural moral and spiritual aspects; and
- b) A living relationship with God and with other people; and
- c) A philosophy of life inspired by a belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- d) The formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church,

and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Joseph's Special School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

St. Joseph's School is a Co-Educational Special School for pupils aged 4-18 years with a Mild General Learning Disability or, with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD) and a General Learning Disability.

The school has three distinct sections:

- i) A Primary School for students with Mild General Learning Disability.
- ii) A Secondary School for students with Mild General Learning Disability
- iii) Solas Classes for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and a General Learning Disability covering primary and post primary ages.

In each section children are placed in age appropriate classes.

St. Joseph's School is a happy, child centred, friendly and caring school, where pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability. The staff is committed to the development and education of each pupil to reach their full potential.

The school provides a supportive environment, for pupils, parents and staff.

### 3. Admission Statement

St. Joseph's Special 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 Special 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Joseph's Special School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister.

St. Joseph's Special 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

St. Joseph's Special School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, provides an education exclusively for students with either:

- a) Mild General Learning Disability; an IQ between 50 and 70 and scores in the adaptive range for Mild General Learning Disability (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application, which includes a recommendation for Special

School for Mild General Learning Disability and is no older than two years)

**or,**

b.) Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD) and a General Learning Disability\_ (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application which includes a recommendation for an ASD class and is no older than two years).

## 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
- c) Parents/Guardians who provide false or misleading information (e.g. use an address which is not their principal private residence at the time of application) will render their applications null and void.

St. Joseph's Special School provides an education exclusively for students with Mild General Learning Disability or, with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD) and a General Learning Disability and may refuse admission to a student, where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school.

- a) For entry to one of our classes for Mild General Learning Disability:
  - the student is in the cognitive range for Mild General Learning Disabilities i.e. has an IQ between 50 and 70 and the student is in the adaptive range for a child with Mild General Learning Disability (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application, which includes a recommendation for Special School for Mild General Learning Disability and is no older than two years) and therefore has the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered in the school;

Or

b) For entry to one of our Autism classes:

- the child has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and a general learning disability (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application which includes a recommendation for an ASD class and is no older than two years) and therefore has the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered in the school.

All decisions on places are contingent on the availability of a suitable vacancy relevant to the educational needs and age of an applicant.

St. Joseph's is a special school, it does not have a particular intake group as many mainstream schools do. In our school, we accept applications from children aged between 5 on the 1st September in the year of entry and less than 18 on the 1<sup>st</sup> September in the year of entry.

Applications submitted by parents/guardians are generally considered only for the particular class they have identified in their application form. However during the application process, the school may advise a parent/guardian that their child is better suited to a different destination class, within the school, based on the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special educational needs of relevance. In this situation, with parent/guardian agreement that application would then be considered for the alternative class.

Class groupings vary from year to year as students leave the school or move to other schools. While the school may choose to move students from one class or section to another if their needs would be better met, it is not guaranteed and parents do not have a right to have students moved to a class of their choosing.

In calculating how many places a class has, the school will use the pupil teacher ratios for Special classes as set out by the Department of Education. Class sizes will not exceed 11 students for our classes for Mild General Learning Disability (though this may be less if students have multiple disabilities) or 6 students for our ASD classes. It may occur that an applicant with multiple diagnoses requires the equivalent of more than one place in that class (in line with Department of Education guidelines for class size and staffing). For example, an applicant for one of our Mild General Learning Disability classes who also has a diagnosis of ASD would require the equivalent of 1.8 places. This will correspondingly reduce the number of other places available or may mean that even where the Board has identified a class grouping as having available places, that class would now be full in light of that applicant's needs.

**The following procedure will apply to all applications for placement in the School:**

The steps below are for the purpose of ascertaining if applicants come within the category of special needs catered for by the school and the steps therefore apply to **all applications** regardless of whether the destination class in question is oversubscribed or not.

Applications will only be accepted for the following year of entry from the dates set out in the school's annual admission notice. Applications received before that period **will not be considered**. The Application Form **must be** returned before the Closing Date for Applications for that particular year of entry. The closing date is set out in the annual Admissions Notice published on the school website.

- a) Parents/guardians download a copy of the Admissions Policy and Application Form from the school website or obtain it from the School Office;
- b) Parents/guardians are asked to return the following:
  1. Completed Application form;
  2. Full birth certificate;
  3. Proof of Address e.g. utility bill; household bill, etc.
  4. Recent psychological assessment report from within the last 24 months and which must contain a detailed recommendation from the Psychologist for the child to attend a special school as set out above and in section 4 of this policy
  5. While not essential parent/guardian can also submit any other school or professional reports from within the last 24 months including
    - reports from the child's present school/pre-school (from within the last 24 months) with the details of the learning and social development of the child and any behaviour issues of relevance.
    - Psychiatric Assessment,
    - Speech & Language Assessment,
    - Occupational Therapy Report,
    - Social Work Report,

**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:

**selection criteria**

a.) The child must meet the enrolment criteria for the class as set out in section 4:

For a class for Mild General Learning Disability:

- an IQ between 50 and 70 and scores in the adaptive range for Mild General Learning Disability (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application, which includes a recommendation for Special School for Mild General Learning Disability and is no older than two years)

**or,**

For a class for Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD):

- ASD **and** a General Learning Disability (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application which includes a recommendation for an ASD class and is no older than two years)

b.) There must be a space in the class in line with Department of Education guidelines for class size and staffing: In calculating how many places a class has the school will use the pupil teacher ratios for Special classes as set out by the Department of Education. Class sizes will not exceed 11 students for our classes for Mild General Learning Disability (though this may be less if students have multiple disabilities) or 6 students for our ASD classes. It may occur that an applicant with multiple diagnosis requires the equivalent of more than one place in that class (in line with Department of Education guidelines for class size and staffing). For example, an applicant for one of our Mild General Learning Disability classes who also has a diagnosis of ASD would require the equivalent of 1.8 places. This will correspondingly reduce the number of other places available or may mean that even where the Board has identified a class grouping as having available places, that class would now be full in light of that applicant's needs.

c.) The child is ordinarily resident (i.e. is ordinarily resident with at least one parent/guardian within the catchment area as defined below and as shown in the map in Appendix 2) and has provided two proofs of address with an Eircode from one of the areas listed.

- First priority will be given to students from Dublin 24
- Second priority will be given to students in Dublin 6W, 10, 12, 16, and 22
- Third priority will be given to students in South County Dublin
- Fourth priority will be given to students living in all other areas



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:

**The children's names will be picked at random by an independent person (who is not on the Board or connected with any person applying for a place in the school) and the first such name picked will be offered the place or the next place on the waiting list in the order they are drawn**

## 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) 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;
- (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;
- (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 Special 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 Special 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 Special 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. Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;

(iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;

(iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

### **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 Special 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 Special 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

### **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:

**As a Special School for students with Mild General Learning Disability or, with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD) and a General Learning Disability we will consider admission of students who have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school for classes other than our intake class if those classes have spaces (as set out by Department of Education and Skills guidelines on class sizes). The same procedure and criteria will apply for those students as set out in this policy in sections 1-14.**

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:

**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.**

**Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants, who meet the criteria for placement as set out in sections 1-13 of this policy, will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.**

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

The board of St Joseph's Special 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**

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 student, 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, 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 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, 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.

### **Review and Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

This policy is a collaborative document and is disseminated to the school community.

Storage Procedures: In St. Joseph's School.

Ratified by: Board of Management, St. Joseph's School June 2020

Reviewed: September 2021

## Appendix 2

**Map of Catchment Area**

The child is ordinarily resident (i.e. is ordinarily resident with at least one parent/guardian within the catchment area as defined below and as indicated in the map below and has provided two proofs of address with an Eircode from one of the areas listed.

- First priority will be given to students from Dublin 24
- Second priority will be given to students in Dublin 6W, 10, 12, 16, and 22
- Third priority will be given to students in South County Dublin

Fourth priority will be given to students living in all other areas

