

# SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY

## DIOCESE OF KILDARE & LEIGHLIN



**NAME OF SCHOOL: ST JOSEPH'S GNS / SCOIL ÍOSAIF NAOFA**

**ADDRESS: DAVITT RD., MOUNTMELICK, CO LAOIS**

**ROLL NUMBER: 07183W**

**CHARITY NUMBER: 20125875**

**PATRON: Most Reverend Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin**

### 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 [15 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 GNS 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 is a Catholic all girls primary school with a Catholic ethos. The Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin is the Patron of this school.

'Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming and inclusive. Therefore, Catholic schools may include children who adhere to other religions or other stances for living. While mindful of their duty to educate in the distinctive beliefs, values, and practices of the Catholic community, teachers will bear witness to an attitude of respect for and appreciation of all'.

*'The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum p15'*

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:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and 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 GNS 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.

It is important that all parents are aware and accept at the time of admission that St. Joseph's is in the first instance a Roman Catholic school where faith and the values of the Gospel find daily expression in every activity within the school.

The school caters for girls from age 4 years to approximately 12 years in classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Teacher numbers are according to DES pupil teacher ratio. Some classes are multiclass. Learning support teachers and SNA's are appointed according to DES regulations.

The school depends on grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science and operates within the rules and regulations laid down from time to time by the Department of Education and Science. This admission policy will have regard to available funding and resources.

The school is subject to The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) and all relevant equality legislation. St Joseph's follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Science which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

Within the context and parameters of Department of Education and Science regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act (1998) and the funding and resources available the admission policy of St Joseph's supports the principles of: -

- inclusiveness*, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need;
- equality* of access and participation in the school;
- parental choice* in relation to enrolment and

- *respect for the diversity* of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

### **3. ADMISSION STATEMENT**

St Joseph's GNS 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.

#### **Single gender schools**

St Joseph's GNS is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

#### **All denominational schools**

St Joseph's GNS 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.

### **4. CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CATERED FOR IN THE SCHOOL/SPECIAL CLASS**

St Joseph's GNS is not a Special School or a mainstream school with a special class attached.

### **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

#### **A school that admits students of one gender only**

St Joseph's GNS provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

In determining enrolment, the Board of Management shall take into account Department of Education and Science regulations regarding staffing provisions, maximum class size and maximum class average and any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation such as physical space, the educational needs and rights of children already enrolled, multi-grade classes and the presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs.

The Board of Management shall at all times have regard for the Health, Safety and Welfare of pupils and teachers and others who work in the school and reserves the right to refuse enrolment on these grounds.

The Board of Management is bound by the Department of Education and Science's Rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the ages of 4 years of age upwards although compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years. Children will be placed in an age appropriate class.

As a general principle and insofar as practicable having regard to the admission policy of St Joseph's, children will be enrolled on application provided there is space available in the requested class. Currently the school is full when we have 242 students ie DEIS PT Ratio of 22 by 11 class teachers. Every effort will be made to keep junior classes to a max of 21 and senior classes to 24 as per DES Cir. We will also try to keep mixed classes to a max of 20.

Pupils will, as a rule, only be admitted to Junior Infant classes if they have reached their fourth birthday by the first day of term - Usually 1<sup>st</sup> September. No new Infant enrolments can be accepted after this date. Children may be admitted to a Junior Infant Class (if there is availability in JI) during the school year provided they are transferring from another school or if they were on the waiting list for a place.

#### **All denominational schools**

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

## **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**

- Sisters of girls already enrolled in the school (including step-siblings, resident at same address)
- Girls of the parish ie. Roman Catholic Parish of Mountmellick.
- Daughters of permanent staff members.
- Girls who are not residents of the parish with priority given to oldest.

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), priority will be given to oldest.

**If there are twins or two with same birthday, both will be offered a place.**

## **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;
- (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, in the case of the school having included a selection criteria based on the siblings of a student attending the school as outlined in Section 6 above.
- (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.

## **8 DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS**

All decisions on applications for admission to St Joseph's GNS 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.

## 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 GNS 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 GNS 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.

(v) **Code of Behaviour**

Girls enrolled in our school are required to co-operate with and support the School/Board of Management's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. The B.O.M. places Parents / Guardians responsible for ensuring that their daughter(s) co-operate with said policies in an age-appropriate way. In accordance with the Department of Education's rules for National Schools, a child may be suspended for gross or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour. These policies may be added to and revised from time-to-time.

## **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 GNS 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 GNS 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:

### **Transfer of Pupils**

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time subject to school policy, available space, the provisions of the Education Welfare Act (2000) and in some cases the approval of the Department of Education and Science.

If we are oversubscribed, a waiting list will be put in place. Priority will be given to children who have moved to the parish and do not have a school place, over children who have a place in a local school but wish to transfer to our school.

Parents who remove children from the school, of their own accord and who then wish to re-enrol may be requested by the principal to apply in writing to the BOM to have their application considered.

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:

Pupils will, as a rule, only be admitted to Junior Infant classes if they have reached their fourth birthday by the first day of term - Usually 1<sup>st</sup> September. No new Infant enrolments can be accepted after this date. Children may be admitted to a Junior Infant Class (if there is availability in JI) during the school year provided they are transferring from another school or if they were on the waiting list for a place.

## 16 DECLARATION IN RELATION TO THE NON-CHARGING OF FEES

The board of St Joseph's GNS 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

A written request should be made to the principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) 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 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 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 Admission Policy was approved by the Patron; Bishop Denis Nulty on 15/9/2020**



**This Admission Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Joseph's GNS on 22/10/20.**

**Goretti Whelan  
(Chairperson)**

**Yvonne Murphy  
(Principal)**

