Admission Policy of St Joseph's NS

School Address:	**Arden View, Tullamore, Co Offaly.**
Roll number:	**18797W**
School Patron:	**Bishop Thomas Deenihan, Bishop of Meath**

Meath Diocesan Education Office

Approved

Signed: M Mahon

Date: 1/10/26

1. Introduction:

St Joseph's NS is a co-educational junior primary school located in Arden View, Tullamore and is under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath. The board of management hereby sets out the school's admission policy which 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 28/08/20. 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 NS 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 NS is a Catholic co-educational junior primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath, Bishop Thomas Deenihan.
"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 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 NS 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.

Vision Statement

St. Joseph's N.S. cherishes all pupils equally and to aid them in achieving their true potential we endeavour to:

-Offer a happy and positive experience of school that fosters a sense of uniqueness and self-esteem whilst maintaining a sense of fun and play

-Promote a good attitude to and respect for peers and teachers and a sense of inclusion in the school community where parents already play an integral role

-Encourage each child to develop to their full potential in all curricular areas and to be motivated in their learning

-Instill a nurturing sense of awe, wonder and beauty and so lead our pupils to God

-Demonstrate a commitment to promoting a healthy attitude towards physical development through exercise and diet

-Value the diversity of our culture and environment and build a sense of citizenship where pupils have a sense of tolerance, responsibility and an awareness of their own rights and the rights of others

Aim of St. Joseph's N.S.:

"Every child, every chance, every day"

We aim to provide a nurturing and happy school which cherishes each child equally. Children are encouraged to develop to their full potential in an inclusive school community in partnership with parents and the local community of Tullamore. Teachers and parents are partners in the education of our pupils and work together to achieve the best possible learning outcomes for each child. We believe that learning should be fun and promote a positive and engaging learning environment.

3. Admission Statement

St Joseph's NS 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 N.S., will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when required to do so by the Council. St. Joseph's N.S., will comply with any direction served on the Board or the patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998.

St Joseph's NS 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 NS 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 NS is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with 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 NS, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with moderate learning disabilities and a class to provide an education exclusively for students with developmental language disorders.

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for moderate learning disabilities or DLD/SSD Class when the following is provided in support of such an application:

Professional report(s) outlining:

• Diagnosis of special educational needs (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)

AND

• A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports

AND

• Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same

AND

• A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class

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

The special classes attached to St Joseph's NS provide an education exclusively for students with a moderate learning disability and children with developmental language disorder and the school may refuse admission to these classes, where the student

concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

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:

1. Siblings or step-siblings of children already enrolled in St Joseph's NS who reside at the same address or siblings of children who have previously attended the school.
2. Children of current staff members
3. Those who permanently reside within the Tullamore parish boundary.
4. All other applicants.

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:

In the event that priority is required to be given to children within any one of the above categories, **older children will be given priority** except in the case of no. 1 above where priority will be given, in the first instance, to applicant children who have a sibling currently enrolled in St. Joseph's NS

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 preschool 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. However, this does not apply to siblings as stated in Criterion 1.

g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

a. 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 NS 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 NS, 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 NS 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 NS 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 NS 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 a 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:

Pupils may be enrolled to classes other than the school's intake group if places are available. The enrolment criteria outlined in this document will apply. Parents are asked to apply for a place in writing stating the reason for transfer. Relevant reports must be included with the application letter. Admission will depend on space available in the required class.
At the moment the Board of Management of the school allocates places based on a standard ratio of 17 pupils per class, allowing for flexible distribution across individual classrooms, based on the current staffing circular from the Department of Education (Circular 06/2023).
The maximum class size in our Moderate Special Classes is 8 and our DLD/SSD Class is 7.

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:

Applications during the school year will be subject to the enrolment criteria outlined in this policy. When processing applications we will endeavour to establish optimum arrangements to best support the learning needs of new and existing pupils. Children who have not previously attended school may start Junior Infants up to September 30th unless in exceptional circumstances. Where possible, children are encouraged to join classes at the start of a term.

Applications for enrolment for children transferring from other schools will be subject to the rules governing National Schools and the criteria for enrolment set out in this policy.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of St Joseph's NS 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.

Note: Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

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 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. Children will remain in classes and will complete appropriate activities in other curricular areas.

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.

Signed: Bernie Mann

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 30/9/2026