

Title of Policy: Admissions Policy of Saint Patrick's Infants N.S.

Introductory Statement:

Founded in 1958, St. Patrick's Infants School is a Roman Catholic Primary School recognised and funded by the Department of Education and Skills as a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross (and the Trusteeship of the Congregation of St Joseph's)

As a Roman Catholic School, St. Patrick's Infants School aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils' cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual abilities and understanding.

The school caters for Junior and Senior Infants. It is an inclusive school and caters for children of all abilities.

There are currently 10 full time teachers, including the principal and 3 resource/learning support teachers. Special Needs Assistants are also employed in the school.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school:

Mission Statement: "We aim to educate our children in a caring catholic environment allowing each individual child to develop to his/her unique potential."

St. Patrick's Infants School operates under the Rules for National Schools and Department Circulars and is funded by grants. The staff is resourced by the Department of Education and Skills. The school is subject to The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (2004), the Equal Status Act (2000) and all other relevant legislation. St. Patrick's Infants School follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998); School policy therefore must pay due regard to the resources and funding made available to it.

Application for enrolment to Junior Infant classes usually takes place in the months /years preceding the date of enrolment with parents / guardians making application for their children in the school.

Aims:

This policy aims to ensure that the parents/ guardians/ pupil and staff have the necessary information to ensure that the pupil seeking enrolment will have his/ her opportunity to learn in a caring and challenging environment.

The policy outlines the information required by the Department of Education and Skills on pupils attending St. Patrick's Infants National School.

Rationale:

The Admissions Policy

The Admissions Policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 in order to assist Parents in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Within the context and parameters of department regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act, and the funding and resources available this school supports the principles of

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational needs.
- Equality of access and participation in the school no child will be refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special needs, disability, language/ accent, gender, traveller status, asylum seeker/ refugee status, religious/ political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.
- Respect for the diversity of values beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment

The school strongly recommends that children enrolling in our school would have completed their preschool year(s).

Decision Making:

- The Board of Management determines the maximum number of children in the school based on the Department of Education and Skills's recommended enrolment.

An acknowledgement of receipt of application will be issued within 21 days of application for enrolment. Further confirmation will issue nearer the date for admission. If further information is required, for example, completion of the enrolment form, additional medical or other professional reports, birth certificate etc., the application will not be treated as complete until such time as all requested information has been provided. On provision of same a letter will issue within 21 days stating the decision of the Board of Management.

- In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment exceeding the number of places available the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:
 1. Brothers and sisters of children already enrolled (including stepsiblings resident at same address)

2. Catholic children living within St Joseph's parish and St Patrick's parish – priority to the oldest.
 3. Catholic children who live outside the parish and who do not have a Catholic school in their parish.
 4. All children who live within the parish boundaries but are not Catholic.
 5. Catholic children from outside the parish.
 6. All children who apply to the school and are not Catholics and not resident in the parish.
 7. Children of staff members in St. Patrick's Schools.
- In determining enrolment the Board of Management shall take into account Department of Education and Skills 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.
 - Decisions in relation to application for enrolment are normally made by Principal in accordance with this policy ratified by the Board of Management. In certain incidents the applications may be referred to the B.O.M for decision. To ensure a safe and effective learning environment for all pupils, where a child has educational, behavioural or special needs the Board of Management will need to make decisions on a case by case basis. The resources available to the school at the time will be taken into account and inform the decision.

Enrolment of Pupils with Special Needs

Children with special needs are welcome to apply for admission to the school and every effort will be made to provide them with an appropriate education as well as to include them in every aspect of school life. The Board of Management may request copies of relevant reports or request that the child be assessed immediately in order to assist the school in establishing needs of the child and to profile the supports in place before the child is admitted to the school. This may include visiting teacher service, resource teacher, special needs assistants etc., specialised equipment or furniture, transport services etc.

Enrolment of Children with Special Needs

Parents are asked on the application form to list, detail and attach any reports/assessments/needs their child has had since the time they were born, or any concerns they may have about their child's behaviour or needs. If the Board of Management becomes aware in September (or earlier or later than September) that parents did not disclose honestly the needs of their child on the application form or withheld reports, the child's admission to the school may be deferred until the BoM has time to assess how the school could meet the needs specified in reports and until resources are in place to meet the child's needs.

Having received an application form, the school will meet with the parents, before enrolment of the child, to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. The Board of Management of Saint Patrick's Infants N.S., through the principal, will request a copy of all of the child's medical and/or psychological report/s. If this is not available the Board will request that the child be assessed immediately. This report is requested to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special education needs and to profile the support services required. Following receipt of the report, the Principal on behalf of the BoM will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. If necessary, a full case conference involving all parties may be held. While recognising the rights of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management is also responsible to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled and their siblings.

Where the Board deems that resources are required, the principal, on behalf of the BoM will apply to the Special Education Needs officer (SENO) for the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: teacher for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other. If the SENO does not sanction the resources necessary to meet the child's needs the BoM will appeal the decision of the SENO.

Following consultation and examination of reports if the BoM using balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children, refuses enrolment the parents will be informed that they are entitled to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. The Board of Management may decide to enrol but to restrict attendance.

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 Skills.

Exceptional Circumstances

The school reserves the right to restrict attendance of a pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

1. The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education and in the opinion of the Board of Management, the pupil poses an unacceptable health and safety risk or disruption to himself/herself, other pupils, to staff or to school property.
2. In reaching decisions in relation to such cases the school will observe the requirements of the Equal Status Act (2000) and other relevant legislation.

(See Appeals Procedures below)

Children of other faiths or none

Bearing in mind the Catholic ethos of the school, every effort will be made so that the school is as inclusive as possible. While Catholic education and the ethos of the school permeates the entire school day, children of other faiths or none, **where request is made in writing**, will be excused from attendance at formal religious instruction classes and specifically Catholic liturgies. As far as is possible, in consultation with parents, suitable alternative arrangements will be made in order to facilitate this. It will not be possible however to provide religious instruction in other faiths.

Application Procedure

Provision of Key Information by Parents

Application forms are available in the school office or on the school website. Parents seeking to enrol children should return a fully completed application form with an original birth/adoption certificate to the school. A Baptismal Certificate if appropriate must accompany this form.

In order to ensure that the school can provide the services required for individual students it is necessary to ascertain general information on the pupil's health, specific requirements and educational experience that they may have.

Certain information will be required when notification of enrolment is made. *The Board provides a specific enrolment application form for this purpose. Such information includes:*

- *Pupil's name, age and address;*
- *Names and addresses of pupil's parents/guardians;*
- *Contact telephone numbers;*
- *Contact telephone numbers in case of emergency;*
- *Details of any medical conditions which the school should be aware of;*
- *Religion;*
- *Previous schools attended, if any, and reasons for transfer, if applicable; and*

Any other relevant information (including any such further information as may be prescribed under the Education Welfare Act (2000 and 2002) or Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004).

- Junior Infants will not be enrolled during the year unless transferring from another school. This is for educational reasons as the curriculum is progressive and it is necessary for the child to complete a full year.
- Parents will be informed of acceptance of the child to the school as soon as possible.
- Children enrolled in the Primary School, are required to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies including the wearing of the school uniform. Parents/ Guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child/children co-operate with these policies in an age-appropriate way. A copy of the Code of Behaviour and a copy of the Ethos Statement will be issued to all parents and each parent will be requested to sign an undertaking to uphold the Code of Behaviour. These policies may be added to and revised when necessary. These policies are available to be viewed through our website or on site in the school.
- It is the policy of Saint Patrick's Infants School that a child enrolling in Junior Infants will be 4 years old on or before the first day of the academic year.
- If the child has been absent for 20 days or more in any school year the school is obliged under the Education Welfare Act 1998 to report these absences via **Student Absence Reports** which are submitted four times each year.
- Pupils, who are transferred to St. Patrick's Infants National School from another school, must provide certain information as follows: letter of transfer from the school from which they are transferring stating the class which the child was enrolled in together with the details of attendance, absences and educational experience, special educational needs or circumstances in accordance with rules of the Department of Education and Skills.
- In the event of a child transferring from our school to another school enrolment details and educational data will be transferred to that school unless specifically requested in writing by a child's parents/guardians not to do so.
- Parents / guardians who are enrolling a child in St. Patrick's Infants National School who is over the age of six and who has not previously attended school will have to account for education received to date by the child/ ward and to consent to the child being assessed by the Learning Support/Resource Teacher.
- Parents / guardians who do not wish their child/ ward to attend religious education classes must inform the class teacher and Principal in writing and make arrangements for their child's supervision during these times.
- The completion of an application form or the placement of your child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.

- The right of every child to an education in the school of his/her choice has been considered.
- Enrolment at the school is conditional on adherence to the school's Code of Behaviour.

Appeals Procedure

Parents/Guardians, if unhappy with the decision of the Board of Management, may appeal to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. An appeal form will be issued by the school to the parents/guardians. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of notice of a Board of Management decision.

Code of Behaviour

Note the Code of Behaviour is attached as an appendix to this enrolment policy.

Roles and Responsibility

This policy will be supported, developed and implemented by the Principal and Board of Management of Saint Patrick's Infants N.S.

Success Criteria

The Principal in conjunction with the Board of management will monitor and evaluate the policy to see that it is effective.

This evaluation will take place annually.

Ratification and Review:

Parents were notified of its existence and were invited to look and comment on the policy, which was displayed in the school's Reception and on the school's website.

This policy will be distributed to all BOM members at meeting level. A copy will be given to Parents' Association representatives. It will be available to parents on the school website and as a hard copy in reception. It will be communicated to teachers via the school's Intranet and to Special Needs Assistants via a hard copy in reception and in the Principal's Office.