



St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS

Enrolment & Admissions Policy

Introduction

St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS is a Catholic co-educational primary school, catering for children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class, with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, Bishop Michael Duignan.

“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. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra 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.

Our Mission Statement

We aim to be a happy and safe “learner-centred” school; where the wellbeing and creativity of pupils and staff are at the heart of all activities and successful learning occurs.

The Enrolment & Admissions Policy (hereafter called “the policy”) was drawn up in consultation with the staff, parents and the Board of Management (BoM) of St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS (hereafter called “the school”). The policy of the school is set out in accordance with the relevant legislation. The BoM trusts that this policy will inform and assist parents/guardians in the process of enrolling their child(ren). The Principal will clarify any queries parents/guardians may have relating to the policy.

The ethos of the school aims is to develop the cognitive, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual education of children. It should be noted that children of parents who do not wish to participate in religious education or instruction may undertake supervised learning activities.

Admissions Policy/Statement

St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

1. the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
2. the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
3. the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
4. the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
5. the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
6. the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
7. the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
8. the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
9. 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. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating 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 requested to do so by the Council.

St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

The policy is based on the principles of:

- Inclusiveness and non discrimination
- equality of access and participation in the school
- parental choice in relation to enrolment and
- respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages in the community

Therefore, no child will be refused admission to the school for reasons of gender, ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, accent, language, traveller status, asylum /refugee status, religious, political beliefs, values, family, social circumstances or civil status

In determining its Policy the BoM has taken account of:

- (i) the design of the school building which facilitates two classes at each level
- (ii) Department of Education & Skills guidance regarding class size and pupil teacher ratio
- (iii) the educational needs and rights of children already enrolled, multi-grade classes and the presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs and
- (iv) the Health, Safety and Welfare of children and school staff

Policy Aims

This policy aims to ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to:

- Comply with the relevant legislation affecting the policy primarily The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), Equal Status Act 2000, The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) the Education Act 2018 and other relevant legislation
- Ensure that all children have equal right to an education in an atmosphere that is supportive of their physical, emotional, moral, social and intellectual development
- Make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner, consistent with it's ethos, the mission statement of the school and legislative requirements

- Make an accurate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in light of its available resources
- Develop an effective relationship between children, parents and school staff.

Communication Procedures re Applications

The BoM is committed to openness and transparency in relation to this policy. All applications will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt of the application. It will also outline the process to be followed. Further letters /emails will be issued as appropriate and as outlined in this policy.

Important Information for Parents/Guardians

- Parents/guardians are fully responsible for:
 - (i) the validity and accuracy of all the information on the Application Form
 - (ii) informing the school of any change in the contact details provided
 - (iii) informing the school of any specific needs or requirements on the Application Form (iv) ensuring that their children cooperate with school policies
- Failure to supply any relevant information requested by the school or failure to make reasonable arrangements to meet with the Principal/Chairperson of BoM, to discuss the application, may result in a child being refused admission to the school
- Children must have reached their 4th birthday by May 1st of the year of enrolment

Enrolment of children with Special Needs

All applications for the enrolment of children with special needs must be accompanied by a copy of all relevant medical reports, such as Psychological, Speech & Language, Occupational Therapy, Child Psychiatry, Paediatric reports etc. The purpose of these reports is to establish the needs of the child relevant to his/her disability/special needs and to identify the school support services required.

Following receipt of such a report the BoM shall assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. If further resources are required the BoM will, prior to enrolment, request the Department of Education and Skills to provide the required resources. These may include any combination of the following; visiting teacher service, allocation of Special Education Teacher (SET) hours, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture etc.

Annual Admission Notice for Junior Infants

Prior to accepting applications for enrolment of Junior Infants, the school will publish an Annual Admission Notice in October. This will be published in the Knocknacarra notes in the Galway City Tribune, our school's website, principal's newsletter and parish newsletter. This will provide information on the Admission Policy and Application Form. It will also provide the key dates for parents in enrolling their child. Parents/guardians will be given a minimum of three weeks notice to submit their child's Application Form. Please note that, submitting applications for very young children will not confer any extra priority for admission to the school. A new list will be compiled for each school year after the Annual Admission Notice.

A. Enrolment Procedures for children for Junior Infants

Stage 1; Application for Enrolment

Applications will only be accepted on the basis of receipt of a fully completed Application Form, which includes PPSN, current address and contact details, including an email address. Information gathered in our application process, including PPSN, is required to log applications on the Department of Education and Skills Primary Online Database.

The school will request a recent copy of a utility bill as evidence of address at a later stage.

Stage 2; School Record of Applications

The school will maintain a record of each child's name, date of birth, address, telephone contact number and date of application on the school's computerised Record of Applications.

Stage 3; Confirmation of Interest

In early January of the year of enrolment, all applicants will receive correspondence requesting the completion of a Confirmation of Interest Form. This completed form must be returned to the school by the date indicated, in order to confirm your continued interest to enrol your child. This ensures that your child's application will remain on the school record of applications.

This correspondence is not a guarantee of a place for your child

Stage 4; Formal Offer of a place

Applicants will be notified of the decision on their application on the date indicated in the published Admissions Notice. Applicants who deferred their place in the previous school year, on the grounds of age, will be offered a place for this school year. In the event of the number of children exceeding available places, places will be allocated according to the following criteria as set out in Table 1.

Table 1; Criteria for prioritisation of offers of enrolment

Priority Criterion

- 1 Brothers and sisters of children already attending this school
- 2 Brothers and sisters of past pupils
- 3 Children of staff members
- 4 Children resident in the parish
- 5 Children not resident in the parish - whose home address is closest to the school (measured by a straight line on an O.S. map)

Where all of the above criteria are equal among applicants, places will be offered based on a supervised lottery draw. This draw takes place once all applicants from our parish have been offered a place.

Stage 5; Formal Acceptance of a place

Both parents/guardians must accept the offer **in writing by a date specified in the Letter of Offer** The offer of a place is subject to the parents/guardians having provided the school with:

- a fully completed, accurate enrolment form
- an original copy of the child's Birth Certificate
- a copy of a current utility bill (within the previous 6 months) and
- written confirmation accepting all school's policies and procedures.
The list includes key policies on Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Child Protection, School Attendance, Learning Support/Special Education and a policy on Pedestrian Access to the school. A complete list of policies is available on the school website www.knocknacarrans.ie
- St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS is a Catholic Primary School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic faith, where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Stage 6: Waiting List

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list. Parents/guardians of these children will be notified immediately outlining the reason why they were refused admission and their position on the waiting list. Should places become available, children will be offered a place with reference to this waiting list.

Appeals Procedure

Parents/guardians, who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the BoM. The Appeal must be lodged in writing within 10 days of receiving the refusal and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds of the appeal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may further appeal to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol their child.

B. Enrolment Procedures for children from Senior Infants to 6th Class

Children from Senior Infants to 6th Class may be enrolled at any time during the school year, subject to availability of space and the provisions of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Stage 1: Application for Enrolment

Applications will be accepted through our school's website. The school will acknowledge receipt of the application. At enrolment the school will request a recent copy of a utility bill as evidence of address.

Stage 2: School Record of Applications

The school will maintain a record of applications for each class. Each child's name, date of birth, address and telephone contact number, and date of application will be recorded.

Stage 3: Formal Offer of a place

Both parents/guardians (as relevant) must accept the offer **in writing by the date specified in the Letter of Offer** The offer of a place is subject to the parents/guardians having provided the school with:

- a fully completed accurate Enrolment Form
- an original copy of the child's Birth Certificate
- a copy of a current utility bill and
- written confirmation accepting all the school policies and procedures

Stage 4: Waiting List

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list. Parents/guardians of these children will be notified immediately outlining the reason why they were refused admission and their position on the waiting list. Should places become available they will be offered in accordance with this waiting list. Where all of the criteria for enrolment (Table 1) are equal among applicants, places will be offered based on a supervised lottery draw, once all applicants from our parish have been offered a place. If parents/guardians are not satisfied with any enrolment decisions made the following appeals procedure is in place;

Appeals Procedure

Parents/guardians, who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the BoM. The Appeal must be lodged in writing within 10 days of receiving the refusal and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds of the appeal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol their child.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The BoM will evaluate and review all aspects of the policy and amend as required. The policy will also be reviewed annually. The principal will report to the BoM on the enrolment process and especially where an applicant is refused admission.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the BoM on December 8th and communicated to the school community via the school website. Hard copies are available on request. This policy supersedes all previous enrolment and admission policies.

Michael Gallagher
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: