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MEÁN SCOIL NAOMH IOSAIF

**ST. JOSEPH'S**  
SECONDARY SCHOOL

# Admissions Policy

<b>Date staff consulted:</b>	<b>September 2017</b>
<b>Date parents consulted:</b>	
<b>Date students consulted:</b>	<b>October 2017</b>
<b>Date ratified at B.O.M. meeting:</b>	<b>November 29<sup>th</sup> 2017</b>
<b>Date for Review:</b>	<b>September 2018</b>

# **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

St Joseph's Secondary School is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School under the trusteeship of C.E.I.S.T. St Joseph's promotes the personal, spiritual, physical, creative and intellectual development of its students in accordance with the mission and vision as articulated in the C.E.I.S.T. charter.

*This Admissions Policy should be considered in conjunction with the St. Joseph's Secondary School Code of Discipline and the Education Act 1998. The procedures outlined in this policy may, from time to time as circumstances demand, be varied or altered.*

The Board of Management of St Joseph's Secondary School is setting out its Enrolment Policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998, Section 15 (2)(d) to assist Parents / Guardians in relation to enrolment in the school. The Principal and the school Secretary will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy. The Principal with the assistance of the school administration staff is responsible for the admissions process. Normally they will deal with any queries and will organise the process as described below.

The Board of Management of the school supports the underlying principles of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000. The school subscribes to the underlying principles of the legislation: partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion, respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

The following admissions policy is written in accordance with the provisions of these Acts. In accordance with our Mercy ethos, we are dedicated to enabling the students to value their own uniqueness as sons and daughters of God and to inspiring them to a deep faith in Jesus Christ within the Catholic tradition. The school also upholds the values outlined in the CEIST charter. The Board of Management therefore upholds its right under section 7 (3) of the Equal Status Act 2000 to maintain the Catholic ethos of the school. Management will further promote the Mercy character of the school by exercising special concern for the poor and disadvantaged students, without prejudice to the rights of any student.

The family, as the primary educator, through its commitment to the values of the school, shares the responsibility for the students' education. St Joseph's has dedicated teachers who are committed to high academic standards. The school provides a rich and diverse curriculum catering for the needs of each individual student. It strives also for excellence in areas of sport and culture, social concern and spiritual values wherein students are encouraged and challenged to realise their full potential as human beings. The mission of our School Community - Staff, Board, Parents, present students and past pupils - is to ensure that graduates of the school, by their relationship with Jesus Christ and through living Gospel values, shall be persons for others in leadership and example in the pursuit of a just world.

St. Joseph's Secondary School was established to cater for the educational needs of young people in the Ballybunion area of North Kerry. Since its inception, the school has established close links with the local National Schools in Ballybunion, Kilconley, Asdee, and Lisselton and has accepted all students from these schools into First Year who have completed enrolment procedures and sat the assessment examination. Students from other schools may also be invited to complete the enrolment and assessment procedures.

Enrolments to all years or courses are subject, in the first instance, to a place being available.

Admission is subject to the following conditions:

- That, in the professional judgement of the School Authority, the student/participant, because of previous education, training or experience, is considered likely to benefit from attendance.
- That the participation of the student/applicant will contribute positively to the school and not infringe, in any way, upon the opportunities or rights of other students or staff.
- The Parent /Guardian and the student shall be given a copy of the code of discipline to read and sign.
- The Board of Management of the school shall not refuse to admit as a student, a child, in respect of whom an application to be so admitted has been made, except where such refusal is in accordance with the published admission policy of the school.
- All disputes in relation to admission will be referred to St. Joseph's Secondary School Board of Management.

### **The Parents/Guardians of enrolment applicants**

The school wishes to see in the parents / guardians a strong support for the Mission Statement and a commitment to the values embodied therein under the following headings:

- pastoral care and spiritual development;
- co-curricular activities;
- the academic curriculum
- justice issues and activities; and
- a willingness to involve themselves as parent(s) / guardian(s) in the life of the school.

Especially important is evidence of a commitment to the promotion of a faith which issues in justice: that is, that they desire that their son or daughter develop his/her spiritual values and grow in concern for others, and that they are open to such development in themselves.

In the senior cycle (including Transition Year), students will be offered a wide choice of opportunities that challenges them to think, reflect, discuss, pray and act upon what they believe. We would like parents / guardians to be enthusiastic in supporting their son/daughter's participation in this programme.

### **Faith Needs of Enrolled Students**

The faith development of our students is given priority through our religious education programme. Students of other faiths who do not wish to participate in the religious education programme during timetabled Religion classes will be required to remain in the classroom under the supervision of the Religion teacher.

Entry to specific programmes will be determined following a review of the application forms and an interview process designed to ascertain the suitability of the applicant for the specific programme. The school may also take into account the availability of other suitable courses within the school to competing applicants. Students who wish to apply for admission into Transition Year should refer to the Transition Year Policy.

### **General Requirements for all students applying**

All enrolments are subject, in the first instance, to a place being available. The school's Board of Management decides in advance the maximum number of First Year students to be enrolled, having due regard to the accommodation, facilities, personnel, plant and resources available.

#### Eligibility:

It will be expected that the pupil will have completed Sixth Class in Primary school or equivalent in another jurisdiction.

#### Requirements:

- Complete an Application Form and submit it before the closing date;
- Submit an original Birth Certificate;
- Ensure that all the required material is submitted with the Application Form
- such as relevant psychological reports etc;
- Attend Registration for First Years;
- Accept in writing the school's ethos as outlined in this document;
- Accept in writing the school's Code of Behaviour and undertake to make "all
- reasonable" effort to ensure their son or daughter's co-operation with the Code.

#### Assessment Test:

Assessment tests to ascertain learning needs will be conducted after students are enrolled in the school. All students must participate in these tests which will provide information to enable the school to make the best possible education available to each student.

#### Enrolment Procedure for First Year

1. The Principal or representative will visit each of the Primary schools in the area to speak to pupils in 6th Class prior to the closing date for applications.
2. Application Forms and Information Packs are distributed in each Primary School by the Principal. Extra copies are left with the Principal of the Primary School for distribution to students who are absent.
3. An Open Night for prospective students and their parents/guardians will be held prior to the closing date for applications, where they can see the school at first hand and experience some of the facilities available.
4. Application Forms will continue to be available directly from the school up to the closing date for applications.

## **Entry into First Year**

### Application Form:

An Application Form must be completed for each student seeking enrolment in the school. All relevant information must accompany the Application Form.

### Closing Date:

The closing date for Applications is contained in the Application Form. The submission of an Application does not imply that the student has been admitted to the school.

### Enrolment:

The school will reply within 21 days after the closing date indicating whether the student has been accepted for enrolment, and offering a place in the school.

### Registration:

The school will arrange a Registration meeting for students and their parents/guardians, who have been successful in their application. It is very important that all students attend this Registration meeting with at least one parent/guardian. (If it is not possible to attend the Registration meeting then the parent/guardian should contact the school immediately. In situations where the number of applications exceed the number of First Year places available, a school place cannot be guaranteed if there is any delay in Registration).

Registration will consist of signing the Registration Form indicating:

- Acceptance of the offer of a place in the school;
- Acceptance of the school's Code of Behaviour;
- Acceptance of the school's ethos as outlined in the Admissions Policy.

### Criteria for Admission:

The Board of Management will determine the number of places it can offer to First Year students having regard for the principles of the CEIST Charter and obligations to the local community. Where there are more applications than First Year places an Admissions Committee consisting of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, one other member of the Board of Management and the school Principal will meet to decide on admissions. Priority will be given to applications strictly in order of preference listed below:

- a) Siblings of present students;
- b) Students from the feeder Primary Schools
- c) All other applicants.

Where there is an excess of applications to places available in any of the categories listed above, places will be allocated by means of a lottery. This lottery will be conducted by the Admissions Committee (student names will be selected at random from a hat by a member of the Admissions Committee) in the presence of an independent witness.

### Late Applications:

Late Applications for First Year will be accepted subject to the following:

- Applicants will be placed on a waiting list if the earlier enrolment process was over-subscribed;
- Applicants who applied before the closing date will be given priority over late applicants;
- Availability of a place in the school;
- Application Form and all relevant information being submitted;
- The criteria for admission will be applied by the Principal;
- The school will as far as practicable reply within 21 days indicating whether the student has been accepted for enrolment and offering a place in the school.

## Entry to a class other than First Year

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time, subject to school policy, available space and in some cases the approval of the Dept. of Education and Science. Parents who transfer their child to St. Joseph's Secondary School will be required to authorise the previous school to supply information concerning attendance and educational progress at his/her previous school. The parent /guardian shall meet with the school Principal/Deputy Principal to discuss the transfer.

The school will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to our school. The Principal will decide on an application for admission to any year other than First Year by applying the following criteria:

1. There must be an available place after the general admissions criteria have been applied;
2. It is in agreement with the school's Admission Policy;
3. The transfer must be in the best interest of the student;
4. The transfer must be in the best interest of the school and the other students in the school;
5. The transfer must be of educational benefit to the student (e.g. it may not be possible to offer the student certain subject combinations, a place in a certain programme etc.)
6. The school Application Form must be completed and submitted;
7. All relevant information from the applicant's former school(s) must be made available, including:
  - Copies of the two most recent school reports for the student;
  - Copies of results of any State Examinations taken by the student.
  - Information regarding the student's attendance record and behaviour record.

Where it is considered necessary by the school, an applicant may be required to complete a further information form regarding the student's educational progress and/or to provide a current education psychological assessment report. Failure to complete any of the necessary documentation listed above or to supply any other relevant documentation requested by the school may result in an applicant being refused admission to the school.

In arriving at a decision the Principal will consult with the student's parents/guardians and former school(s). The Principal may also consult the local Educational Welfare Officer. The student will be interviewed by the Principal (usually in the presence of her parent/guardian) using the criteria outlined above.

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days after a parent/guardian has provided the relevant information, the Principal shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/guardians in writing thereof.

## **Procedures Relating To Admission To Specific Programmes, Subjects Or Subject Level**

If the demand for a specific programme, subject or subject level exceeds the number of places available then the school will make every effort, within the constraints of teaching resources etc., to accommodate the student. Where it is not possible to accommodate all applicants then priority will be given to students from within the school and to those who have completed all application forms on time.

### **Enrolment of Children with Additional needs**

The B.O.M. of St. Joseph's Secondary School supports the principle of inclusiveness and children with disabilities or other special educational needs will be enrolled in the school. St Joseph's welcomes applications from students with additional needs and will use the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs up to a nominal cost so that these students are free to participate in the life in the school in so far as is reasonably practicable. While recognising and fully supporting parents' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply of resources, suitable to the needs of the individual student, being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills.

The school welcomes applications from students with special educational needs unless the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned and the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated.

The Principal must be made aware of any additional needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed where possible. Parents are requested to outline the details of a child's special educational needs on the Application Form.

The Principal, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of these students can be met. When a parent/guardian of a child with a disability or additional needs applies for enrolment a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report will be requested or where such a report is not available, the parent/guardian will be asked to authorise to have the child assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or additional needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. If the Board deems that further resources are required it will, prior to enrolment, request the Dept. of Education and Science, to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, resource teacher for additional needs, additional needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other.

Contact will be made with the National Council for Special Educational Needs regarding additional needs resources to which the student may be entitled. The Principal may request a meeting with the parents of the student to discuss the application and the student's needs. The parents of the student may request a meeting with the Principal to discuss the student's educational or other needs.

N.B. It may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process such applications. Parents are strongly advised to inform the school as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of making application.

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days, after a parent/guardian has provided all the relevant information, the Principal shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/guardians in writing thereof. (Education Welfare Act (Section 19 (3))).

### **Entry to Specific Subjects & Subject Levels**

Entry to specific subjects will be determined by reference to the preferences indicated by students on their application form and by reference to the student's previous performance at that subject relative to the other applicants; their results in State examinations where available will also be considered. Where this does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the school may survey the students' previous teacher(s) about their suitability for the subject or alternative subjects and the school may also take into account the availability of other suitable subjects available to competing applicants.

Entry to specific subject levels will be determined by the students' previous performance at that subject, their results in State examinations where available and the advice of the relevant teacher(s).

### **Application to repeat a year:**

All such applications are subject to Dept of Education & Skills Circular Letter M2/95. Applications will be considered in the light of places available on the relevant programme, subject to the class size and overall enrolment restrictions set out elsewhere in this policy. Applications must be in writing and must state the relevant Circular and the particular clause(s) being invoked in support of the application and must be accompanied by supporting documentation, as appropriate. The school must be satisfied that the applicants, in light of their special circumstances that gave rise to the application, applied themselves to the best of their ability. Students taking a programme for the first time may be given priority in terms of subject choices within the programme.

### **Applications to Transition Year**

#### The Course

The general aim of the Transition Year is the preparation of young people for their roles as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society. The programme, therefore, aims to provide young people with the skills and support necessary to develop their own individual talents, aptitudes and abilities with regard to future educational and/or vocational preparation.

#### Emphasis is placed on:

- a. Education for maturity, and spiritual and personal development, including social awareness and increased social competence.
- b. The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on self-directed learning.
- c. Education through experience of working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.

#### Aims of Programme:

- a. To provide an opportunity for all students to mature intellectually, socially, physically and spiritually.
- b. To consolidate and develop the learning experience of the student which has taken place during the Junior Cycle.
- c. To develop study habits more suited to Senior Cycle and Third Level and to encourage the development of self-directed learning in all students so as to enable them to achieve at 3rd Level.

- d. To foster a growing sense of responsibility in the student for his/her own life so that he/she may become a responsible, socially conscious citizen, able to cope successfully with the demands of society and of life.
- e. To encourage students to value inter-personal relationships and to inculcate this through team-work and project work.
- f. To introduce the student actively to the world of work so that they will learn to work with others and develop a good working relationship with others and learn to engage in dialogue with others in a respectful way.

### Application process

Transition Year is not a compulsory part of the curriculum in St. Joseph's. Students may wish to avail of the course as one of the Senior cycle options and can apply for the course at the end of 3rd year.

An information night is provided for parents and students on Senior Cycle options after which application forms are made available. Applications are accepted up to the deadline printed on the form. Applications received after that date may not be considered if sufficient places are not available.

### The application process will be as follows:

- Stage 1. A number of criteria have been developed for entry into Transition Year based on the capacity of the students to engage with the course as demonstrated during the Junior Cycle and in particular during the previous school year. These criteria are printed on the application form and will include disciplinary records. In this way consideration is given to the input of teachers who are involved with the student.
- Stage 2 After scoring on the basis of the above a cut-off point will be determined students above which will be deemed to have secured entry to TY. Students below this cut-off score will be invited to attend for an interview. The interview will allow students the opportunity to make up points to supplement their score from Stage 1 on the basis of which the remainder of places will be offered in TY.

Offers of places are made in writing to students after the applications/interview process is completed. The assignment of a student to Transition Year is considered final once the offer of a place has been accepted by the student and his/her parents or guardians. Continuation of students in Transition Year is conditional on their continued good behaviour in the year and students can be moved from Transition Year into 5th year on recommendation from the Discipline committees.

### **Admission to repeat the Leaving Cert Programme:**

#### Criteria

The school will consider requests to repeat the Leaving Certificate from students. Priority will be given to students of the school and only thereafter to students from other schools. As distinct from students enrolled in St Joseph's, repeat applicants from other schools are considered as requests for Transfer.

While the school sees itself as having a commitment to our own students in relation to repeat Leaving Certificate, all applications for repeat, whether from students from within or without the school, will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- capacity of the school, in terms of numbers, to take repeat candidates
- capacity to provide students with requested options
- the application must be received by the stated closing date on the application form.
- previous compliance with school behaviour code
- previous record in terms of work rate and effort in class
- previous attendance record

Decisions on the last 3 criteria will be based on school reports and records. Students applying from outside the school will be asked to provide references and reports from their previous schools.

### Requirements of students

St. Joseph's does not have the facility to guarantee a separate Leaving Certificate Repeat class in any academic year due to pressure of numbers. Should students be accepted for repeating, we expect a high standard in regard to study and behaviour, for the sake of their own success and as an example to the other students who do have their experience to draw upon. In particular we would like to stress the following:

1. Repeat students are expected to behave like all other students and obey the school discipline code.
2. They must attend school from 9.00 to 3.30 as with other students.
3. Full uniform is expected at all times.
4. They must take at least 6 subjects plus Religious Education.

The requirements outlined here will form the basis of a contract to be signed by the prospective repeat student on the basis of which they will be accepted to repeat. Breach of this contract will result in termination of the repeat arrangements.

## **Appeal regarding Admissions**

An appeal against the decision of the school Principal may be made to the Board of Management.

### Right to refuse admission:

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse to enrol a student who has applied for admission to the school. The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could include the following:

1. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the students' behaviour would be detrimental to the education of other students in the school, basing our value judgements on the principles of natural justice
3. The applicant or parents/guardians, have furnished incorrect, inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information to the school authorities in the course of the application process
4. Where the parents/guardians and/or the applicant refuse to sign the school's code of Behaviour.

Ultimately, the right to refuse admission is a matter for the Board of Management, who must balance the rights of the individual alongside the rights of the school community in line with legislation. In the event of a refusal, the parent has a right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) to the Department of Education and Skills.

## **Appeals**

Under the Education Act 1998, Section 29, parents have a right to appeal a refusal by a school to enrol a student. Where a decision is made to refuse enrolment of a student, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, shall be informed of the decision by letter.

Initially, the applicant can appeal a refusal to enrol to the Board of Management. Appeals should be submitted in writing, outlining the grounds for the appeal, to the Secretary of the Board of Management. Appeals must be submitted within one calendar month (31 days) of the date of receipt of the refusal letter. The Board of Management will provide opportunity to the family or applicant to present the appeal to a sub-committee of the Board.

Further to an unsuccessful appeal to the Board of Management and pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, there is a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against a decision of the Board of Management to refuse to enrol a student. This right of appeal can be exercised by the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, by the student.

Appeals must be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the School was notified to the parent/guardian or student. As a general rule, appeals will only be considered by the appeals committee under section 29 where the parties are unable to resolve the issue at local level. Accordingly, the appellant and the Board of Management will first consider the matter at local level to see if an accommodation can be reached. Appeals to the Secretary General must be made in writing on the appropriate form (a copy is available in the school). The appellant should at the same time notify the school of any appeal or, alternatively, send a copy of the completed Application Form to the school.