Admission Policy of St Joseph's GNS

Convent Road
Clonakilty
Co Cork
P85AX90

Roll number: 07651G

School Patron: Bishop Fintan Gavin

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 June 2025 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 Josephs 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 GNS is a Catholic School under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork and Ross. Inspired by the teachings of Catherine McAuley, we wish to focus on developing the moral, spiritual, physical, academic, aesthetic and cultural aspects of each individual pupil in a Christian atmosphere of care, respect & joy.

All members of the school community feel happy and secure working in a spirit of encouragement and enthusiasm while recognising and celebrating diversity. Our aim is that all children should leave St Joseph's GNS with an enthusiasm for learning, a thirst for knowledge, an appreciation of their faith and the world they live in, and above all, many happy memories.

3. Admission Statement

St Josephs 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 girl applying for admission to this school.

Primary schools receiving applications from applicants of a minority religion
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 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

4. National Council for Special Education

St. Josephs GNS 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. Josephs GNS 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.

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 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.

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:

1. Sisters of girls already enrolled
2. Girls living within the parish of Clonakilty
3. Girls living outside the parish of Clonakilty

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:

1. A place will be allocated to the first person to submit a completed enrolment form to the office
2. Completed enrolment forms will be numbered according to the one that is submitted first
3. Should both forms be submitted on exactly the same date and time, a place will be offered based on a lottery system.

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:

There are limited exceptions to some of these:

(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) 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.
This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

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 (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

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.

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St Josephs 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 Josephs 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.

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.

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.

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.

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:

1. A completed enrolment form and written agreement to support the school's Code of Behaviour / Anti-Bullying policy is required
2. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules of National Schools, Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000.
3. Decisions in relation to application for enrolment are made by the Board of Management
4. Parents will be informed of acceptance of the child to the school as soon as possible
5. Once a child is accepted for admission to the school, a decision on the class to which that child is assigned will be a matter for the Principal
6. The class a child will be assigned to is determined by the following factors:


Class size – 32 pupils being the maximum number of pupils in any class


Age of the child


Previous schooling


Attendance


Level of fluency in English

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:

1. Availability of places in the class
2. Age of the child
3. If the class is over-subscribed, a place on the waiting list for that class will be offered
4. Should a place in the class become available, an offer will be made
5. The waiting list applies to the current school year that the application is made only (Section 12 & 13 above)

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

This rule applies to all schools.

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.

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:

1. Request in writing must be made to be excused from attendance at formal religious instruction classes and Catholic liturgies
2. In consultation with parents, suitable alternative arrangements will be made in order to facilitate the child during religious instruction
3. Instruction in other faiths is not possible

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.

Section 19: Enrolment of Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

St Joseph's GNS Board of Management provides 1 class for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) guidelines and support structures. It is committed to providing the highest quality of education for the children concerned.

The pupil/teacher ratio is 6:1 with Special Needs Assistant support in line with DES guidelines. The number of admissions depends on the number of places available that may vary from year to year. We do not operate a "first come first served" system.

Establishment of the ASD Enrolment Committee

The Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for enrolling students with ASD in the school. The BoM has established an ASD Enrolment Committee, the members of this committee are:

- Conor Mulcahy (Principal)
- Sarah Geaney (Deputy Principal)
- Ruth Nagle (Autism Class teacher)

The role of the committee is to advise the BoM on matters relating to the admission of students with ASD.

Criteria for Admission

- Diagnosis of special educational needs (e.g. Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11
- (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 for autism.
- Parents/guardians must notify the NCSE by the deadline specified annually (currently
- October 1st of the year preceding admission) in order to obtain the NCSE confirmation letter.
- St. Joseph's GNS provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit as a student for the ASD class, a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

The BOM will not refuse a child on the basis of ethnicity, disability, traveller status, refugee status, political beliefs or family or social circumstances, provided they fulfil the enrolment criteria.

Fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily ensure enrolment if:

- Necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment are not available
- Sufficient classroom space is not available
- The multi-disciplinary team decide that the school is unable to adequately meet the needs of the child

Application Form

Parents/guardians who wish to enrol children in the ASD class are required to complete and application form within the timeframe outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice attached to this policy. The criteria for admission are available on the school's website or can be emailed to parents if requested.

Required Information

If a place is available, the criteria for selection outlined in section 6 above will be applied:

- Pupil's name, age and address.
- Birth Certificate
- Parents'/guardians' names, address, contact telephone number and email
- Contact names, telephone numbers in case of emergency
- Doctor/G.P.'s name, telephone number.
- Details of any medical conditions/medication that the school should be aware of.
- Up to date Psychological Assessment and Speech and Language Report.
- Religion.
- Baptismal Certificate in the case of Roman Catholic children.
- Basic details in respect of whether a Family Law order exists in relation to the child.
- Any other relevant information.

The school will annually review the suitability of the placement in the ASD class with the cooperation of the principal, the ASD team and the parents/guardians.

The Integration Policy of St Joseph's GNS outlines the levels of integration for pupils in the ASD class into the mainstream school. Parents/guardians are invited to visit the school. It is

the responsibility of the parents/guardians to liaise with the DES regarding suitable transport for the child to and from school. This needs to be arranged in advance of the commencement of the school year Parents/guardians will be required to participate in development of their child's Support Plans twice annually.

Excess of applications for places available: Criteria for Selection

In the event that applications for enrolment exceed the number of places available, priority will be given based on the following criteria:

- Fulfilment of the criteria set out above
- Children currently enrolled in mainstream in St Joseph's GNS where a professional report recommends placement in the ASD class.
- Siblings of current pupils.
- Children living in the Clonakilty town and locality
- Siblings of past pupils (25% of places)

Note: The date of registration is not taken into consideration when places are being allocated.

This Admissions Policy was reviewed in September 2025 in line with circular

0039/2025 and Information Note 002. It incorporates the revised eligibility criteria for

special class admissions, including the requirement for an NCSE confirmation letter.

The policy has been approved by the Patron and ratified by the Board of

Management.