

St. Thomas' JNS

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Admissions Policy

Policy Summary Details

Policy Title:	Admissions Policy
Written/Reviewed:	March 2024
Ratified by the BOM	March 2024

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The chairperson of the Board of Management, **Mary Kenny** and the Principal, **Suzanne O'Reilly**, will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this policy.

School Name: St. Thomas' Junior National School

School Address: Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Telephone No.: 01 – 452 58 55

Fax: 01 451 9451

Email: info@stthomasjns.ie

Denominational Character: Roman Catholic

Name of Patron: Catholic Archbishop of Dublin

St. Thomas Junior National School follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998) (See Appendix).

The school depends on grants and teacher resources provided by DES and it operates within the regulations laid down by DES. School policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

Within the context and parameters of DES regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act (1998), and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Ethos of St. Thomas Junior National School

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St. Thomas' JNS is a Catholic school with a Catholic ethos. Over the years the Principal, the Board of Management, the whole school staff, the pupils and the parents/guardians have worked together to create a positive and caring ethos throughout this school. This positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships, both the professional relationships between the staff as a whole and also the ways in which the staff members treat the pupils and parents/guardians and the way the pupils and parents/guardians, in turn, treat the staff members. This caring ethos permeates all teaching and learning situations as well as all staff relations in our school and it contributes to the formation of strong and healthy relationships throughout the whole school community. It is in keeping with this positive school ethos that the Admissions Policy was originally devised and is reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

Our School Motto is "Everyday Counts"

Admission Statement

St Thomas JNS 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 Thomas' JNS 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.

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Aims of Admissions Policy

The Admissions Policy of St. Thomas Junior National School aims

- to provide equality of access and participation in the school to the children living in the catchment area of Jobstown
- to create a fair and equitable system whereby pupils can gain admission to this school
- to create an inclusive structure of enrolment whereby pupils with a disability or other special educational need are treated with equality and dignity
- to create a non discriminatory system of enrolment whereby the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life among the people of Jobstown are valued and respected
- to create and maintain an atmosphere of respect and tolerance whereby the applicant for a place in this school feels valued and affirmed
- to give parents/guardians a choice in relation to the education of their children.
- This policy was last updated in April 2020

Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see 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
- c) Children shall be admitted in accordance with the following categories:

Junior Infants

To enrol in Junior Infants in **St. Thomas Junior National School** a child must be the correct age i.e. 4 years of age on or before 1st September of the school year in which admission to the school is sought or the day we return to school in that particular year.

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In the event of applications for enrolment exceeding the number of places available in the school preference will be given as follows:

1. Children who have completed the Early Start Programme at St. Thomas Junior National School.
2. Children who have siblings in St. Thomas Junior and St Thomas Senior National Schools
3. Children living in the catchment area of Jobstown
4. Children living outside the catchment area of Jobstown

Early Start

To enrol in Early Start in **St. Thomas Junior National School** a child

- Must be the correct age i.e. **3 years old** on the 1st of September of the school year in which admission to the school is sought (this date is subject to change by the DES)
- Must be living in the catchment area of Jobstown
- As Early Start is an integral part of **St. Thomas Junior National School**, the child's parent / guardian must commit to transferring their child to Junior Infants in this school on completion of the Early Start year.

Children living outside the catchment area of Jobstown will be considered for enrolment in Early Start, provided space is available after all the children living in the catchment area of Jobstown have been enrolled.

Allocation of Places in Early Start

In the event of applications for enrolment in Early Start exceeding the number of places available, priority will be established as follows:

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1. Children, living in the catchment area of Jobstown, with additional or significant needs, which can be met within the Early Start setting.
2. Children, living in the catchment area of Jobstown, perceived most at risk of not reaching their full potential in the educational system.
3. Children, living in the catchment area of Jobstown, who have siblings in St. Thomas National Schools.
Priority will be established according to the classes in which the siblings are placed and the following order will apply:

Junior School - Early Start, Junior Infants to 2nd Class,
Senior School - 3rd to 6th Class
4. Children living in the catchment area of Jobstown, who do not have older siblings.
5. Children living outside the catchment area of Jobstown.

Further information regarding Early Start is available on the Department of Education website

Oversubscription (Early Start and Junior Infants)

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the selection criteria in the order listed above to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

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:

Places will be offered in accordance with date of birth (oldest to get priority)

If there is still a tie for places , there will be a draw.

What will not be considered or taken into account

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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) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) 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.

Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St Thomas JN will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and 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.

Notifying applicants of decisions

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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).

All successful applicants will be invited to an individual meeting with the principal or member of school teaching staff. Children are more than welcome to attend this meeting. The full registration process will be completed and parents/guardians will have the opportunity to discuss matters particular to their child such as special educational needs if they wish.

Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St Thomas JNS, 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.

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 Thomas JNS 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

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- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out above.

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).

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 Thomas' JNS 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. (This applies to both Junior Infants and Early Start)

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Placement on the waiting list of St Thomas JNS 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.

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 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 this policy.

In general, if a child has not attended school at all they will not be admitted to junior infants after the mid-term break in October. They can apply for an Early Start place (if available) or wait for next enrolment to junior infants.

Pupil Transferring from another School

Pupils may transfer to **St. Thomas Junior National School** at any time subject to school policy, availability of space and in some cases, the approval of DES. A Parent/Guardian who wishes to transfer his/her child to this school is required to fill out an Application Form.

On receipt of a place in this school the parent/guardian will be asked to fill out the registration form and sign the consent form.

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It is a requirement of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Section 20 (5) (a) (b) that information concerning the child's educational progress and school attendance be communicated between schools.

Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The board of St Thomas JNS 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.

Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents of the student, have 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.

Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of 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.

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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.

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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.

Application Process

Applications for places in Early Start and Junior Infants in **St Thomas Junior National School** for the start of the new school year are made during a designated time each year.

Parents /Guardians are notified about this designated time by means of the following

- A notice is placed on the school website and social media outlets
- A note is sent home with the pupils of this school
- Notices are placed in the locality:
 - Community Centre
 - Health Centre
 - Local Churches
- Parents' Core Group are notified
- A banner is displayed at the school entrance gates.

Notification

The Board of Management of **St. Thomas Junior National School** will notify parents of their decision within 21 working days after the closing date for receipt of Application Forms.

The Board of Management enrolls children in this school in accordance with the DES Rules and in accordance with the school's Admissions Policy. Space in the school is determined by DES guidelines regarding pupil teacher ratio, available classroom accommodation, physical space, the health and welfare of children.

The Board of Management is bound by the *DES Rules for National Schools* which provides that pupils may only be enrolled from the age of 4 years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years.

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Parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour and are requested to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour is acceptable to them at their registration meeting.

Successful applicants will be offered a place within 21 days after the closing date for receipt of applications.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing 21 days after Application that they have not been offered a place and have been put on a waiting list. Being on the waiting list does not guarantee a place in Junior Infants.

Ratification

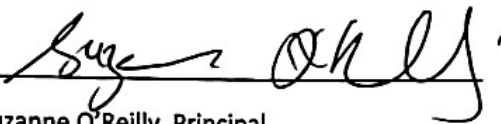
The updated Admissions policy was submitted to the Board of Management for approval in April 2020 and to the Patron Body in April 2020. It will be presented at the next Board of Management meeting for final ratification and will come into immediate effect.

Implementation Date & Timetable for Review

This updated Enrolment Policy of St. Thomas Junior National School will apply to all applications received for September 2022 up to review of this policy. It will be reviewed in September 2024 or earlier if legislation requires.

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Mary Kenny, Chairperson


Suzanne O'Reilly, Principal