



St Francis National School

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Admissions and Enrolment Policy

Rationale

St. Francis National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school in the village of Blackrock, Co. Louth. This policy was formulated in consultation with the principals of the three parish schools: St. Oliver Plunkett NS, St. Fursey's NS, and St. Francis NS.

St. Francis National School operates under the Rules for National Schools and Departmental Circulars and is funded by grants and teachers resourced by the Department of Education and Skills. The school is subject to The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) and all relevant equality legislation. St. Francis National School follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

Ethos

St. Francis National School is a vibrant, friendly and welcoming school that values trust and openness in a safe working environment. We prepare our pupils for their place in a multicultural society by actively promoting equality and by celebrating the diversity we have within our school community.

While respect is paid to all religious and/or value systems, St. Francis National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Armagh.

St. Francis National School supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and of participation in school life, with respect for diversity of tradition, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society, whilst working within the context of the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Education and Skills.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Junior Infants:

Parents seeking a Junior Infant place for their child in St. Francis National School should return a completed application form (available in the office or on the school website) with an original birth/adoption certificate to the school and a household utility bill as proof of address.

Places will be offered provided there is space available and taking into consideration Department of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to class size and/or staffing provisions. The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each class bearing in mind, in particular:

- The size of available space in classrooms.
- The educational needs of children.
- The existence of multi-grade classes.
- The presence of children with special education/behavioural needs
- Department of Education and Skills maximum class average directives
- The parameters of the schools Health & Safety Policy

Places will only be offered to pupils who have reached their **4th birthday** on or before the date of registration. However, we recommend children have reached or are nearly at their 5th birthday. The school will request an original birth certificate with every enrolment.

The school catchment area is defined as the Parish Haggardstown and Blackrock. This criteria will be strictly applied. The following exceptions will apply:

- Siblings/step-siblings of children already enrolled in the school
- Children of staff members

The following criteria will apply where there are not enough places to meet applications for Junior Infants, according to the following priorities:

1. Siblings/step-siblings of children already enrolled and children of staff members
2. Children permanently residing in the school catchment area (proof of address will be requested)
3. Date of initial application
4. The Board of Management Class has agreed that class size will be kept to a maximum 30 from the 2018 intake of Junior Infants. This will be reviewed annually.

The Board of Management, at its discretion and only in exceptional cases, may consider extending the upper limit on class sizes to 32 in classes established prior to 2018. Applications in such cases will be considered on a case by case basis.

Please note: The completion of an application form or the placement of a child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school. There are three schools serving the local community. Unsuccessful applicants will be automatically referred to the other schools.

Parents whose children are unsuccessful in achieving places in St. Francis NS or in either of the other two schools in our catchment area, will be offered a place on a waiting list for the class of application.

Decision making

Decisions in relation to application for enrolment are made by the Board of Management. Parents will be offered a place in writing and that place will be guaranteed only upon receipt on the parental acceptance form.

Admission to the Junior Infant class takes place once a year at the start of the academic year except when a child is transferring from another school.

Pupils transferring

1. From outside the school catchment area Other pupils may be enrolled during the school year if newly resident in the school catchment area. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules for National Schools, The Education Welfare Act and this school's enrolment policy.

2. From within the school catchment area

Transfers not involving a change of address will be assessed on an individual basis and may only be considered at the end of a school term.

In both cases, the same criteria will apply as for the enrolment of Junior Infants (see above). In some cases the approval of the Department of Education and Skills will be sought.

In both cases information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress will be sought from previous school(s) attended before enrolment.

Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs enrolling in St. Francis National School will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management will require a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or request that the child be assessed in order to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the child and to profile the support services required. The Board of Management will

endeavour to have all resources and support in place before the child is admitted to the school. This may include visiting teacher service, resource teacher, special needs assistants etc, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services etc.

The school will meet with the parents of child with special needs to discuss the school's suitability for the child. If necessary a full case conference may be called including parents, class teacher, learning support teacher, resource teacher and psychologist or social workers as appropriate.

It may be necessary for the Board of Management to defer enrolment of a child pending assessment report and/or provision of resources by the Department of Education and Skills to meet the needs specified by in the psychological and medical reports.

Where it is felt that St. Francis National School is not in a position to provide the necessary resources, parents are advised to consider a special school, which is designed and resourced to specifically cater for the needs of children with special educational needs.

This policy will also apply in the case of a child with special needs transferring from another school.

On enrolment

Children enrolled in St. Francis National School, are required to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies. Parents/Guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children co-operate with these policies in an age-appropriate way. Each parent will be requested to sign an undertaking to uphold the school code of Behaviour and other policies.

Appeals Procedure

Parents who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. It must be addressed, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. 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.

Responsibility for Review:

All members of staff, Parents Association, BoM.

Timeframe for Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually in September.

Next review:

September 2020

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Ratified by the Board of Management on 18/6/2019 (Date)

Signed: Padraig Heene
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

