

SS. Michael and
Peter JS

Admission
&
Participation
Policy

Section I

SS Michael and Peter JS, Arklow, Co. Wicklow was established in September 2015. SS Michael and Peter JS, under the Patronship of the Catholic Bishop of Dublin, is situated in Arklow Parish and caters for 450 pupils approximately. On completion of their education in SS Michael and Peter JS, pupils transfer to St. John's Senior National School and other schools at the discretion of parents/guardians.

SS Michael and Peter JS, Hickey's Hill, Arklow, Co. Wicklow is a Roman Catholic School.

“A Roman Catholic School (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides Religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith” – Schedule of a Roman Catholic School.

The school caters for the junior range of classes from Junior Infants to Second Class. It is an inclusive school and caters for children of all abilities. There is an administrative Principal, 17 full time class teachers, 3 ASD Unit classes and 7 support teachers employed in the school. Special Needs Assistants are assigned to the school by the Department of Education and Skills to enable the inclusion of certain children with special education needs. One secretary, one caretaker and three cleaners are employed.

SS Michael and Peter JS operates in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and Departmental Circulars, Diocesan Policies for Primary School and is funded by grants. Staff are 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 Educational Needs Act (2004) equality law and other relevant legislation.

SS Michael and Peter JS follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

Management

SS Michael and Peter JS is a Catholic co-educational school under the Patronage of the Bishop of Dublin.

The school is managed by a Board of Management.

Section II

The Policy

This policy has been formulated by the Board of Management in conjunction with the Parents Association and Staff and in accordance with the Employment Equality Act 1997 and Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2000 and Equal Status Acts 2000 & 2004 and Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004. The Employment Equality Act 1997 safeguards the rights of schools of religious denominations to give priority to children of their particular denomination over children of other denominations. Accordingly the Board of Management in this Admission and Participation policy will give priority to Roman Catholic Children.

This policy is subject to any directions, which may be issued from time to time by the Minister for Education and Skills, in accordance with the provision of the Education Act 1998.

1. Our School policy having regard to the principles and requirements of a democratic society promotes respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and life styles in society. It requires the parents elect, on the child's behalf, to abide by the rules and ethos of the school. Our policy promotes the integration of children with special educational needs including disabilities, provided that this is in their best educational interest and when all the necessary support services have been provided by the Department of Education & Skills.

2. **School Curriculum**
The term "Curriculum" encompasses the content, structure and process of teaching and learning which the school provides in accordance with that prescribed by the Department of Education & Skills and the school's educational objectives and values. The curriculum in SS Michael and Peter JNS, Arklow, reflects a holistic approach to education. The ethos and general environment of the school are important factors in providing a balanced, integrated, stimulating curriculum appropriate to the needs of individual students. SS Michael and Peter JNS appreciates the life-affirming qualities of the Arts and Physical Education. The revised School Curriculum as prescribed by the Department of Education & Skills in 1999 may be amended from time to time in accordance with Section 9 & 30 of the Education Act 1998. In addition to the above, the school endeavours to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities. It is expected that the children will participate fully in all aspects of the school curriculum. Where a parent/guardian(s) removes his/her child from participation in the curriculum, the parent/guardian(s) is responsible for the child during that period.

3. While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of SS Michael and Peter JNS, Arklow is also responsible to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. Assisting the school in such circumstances, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in

each separate classroom as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills Directive and bearing in mind:

- a. Size/Available space in classroom / Health and Safety Issues regarding children and staff. (Health and Safety Policy)
- b. Educational needs of children of a particular age.
- c. Multi-grade classes.
- d. Presence of children with special educational/behavioural/emotional needs. (S.E.N. Policy)
- e. Department of Education & Skills maximum class average directives, currently standing at 28 for 2013-2014 school year. (See Appendix 3)
- f. Appropriate Supports & Resources available.
- g. Time of school year.

4. **Safety Statement & Code of Behaviour**

SS Michael and Peter JS, Arklow has its own Specific Safety Statement & Code of Behaviour, which are an integral part of the school plan. (See Policies)

5. **School Anti-Bullying Policy**

SS Michael and Peter JS, Arklow has a written Anti-Bullying Policy, which defines bullying as “repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical abuse, conducted by an individual, or group against others.” Bullying, under any guise, will not be tolerated and parents are expected to co-operate fully with the school at all times in this matter. (See Anti-Bullying Policy)

6. **Child Protection Policy**

SS Michael and Peter JS, Arklow has adopted and implemented the Department of Education & Skills Guidelines and procedures for schools in relation to child protection and welfare. (See Child Protection Policy)

7. **Copies of School Policies are available to view on request from the school office.**

Section III Procedures – Application, Admission Criteria, Decision & Appeals.

- During the school year, prior to enrolment, parents/guardians may express an interest to enrol their child.
- The school informs these parents/guardians by letter re: date of formal application, which takes place in the school.
- A copy of the school’s Code of Behaviour and the School’s Ethos Statement will be issued to these parents/guardians for their attention.

- The date of formal application may be in the Spring of the year of entry to the school on 1st September. (The Chairperson reserves the right to alter this date).
- Parents/Guardians, who wish to enrol children in Junior Infants are required to come to the school, with the child, as the enrolment process is by way of written application only.
- The Board of Management will communicate the date of formal application to the school community through any combination of the following: announcement in the local Church, parish newsletter, school newsletter, text-a-parent, and/or local paper/radio.
- At the formal application session the parent/guardian(s) will need to complete and present an “Enrolment Form” accompanied by an original birth/adoption certificate, a baptismal certificate where applicable and proof of address to the school.
- Applications for enrolment must be signed by both legal guardians, where appropriate.
- Other information may be required when a child is being enrolled (see appendix)
- Parent/guardian(s) will be required to sign the “Enrolment” as an undertaking that they have read, support, and will adhere to the School’s Policies/Procedures and Code of Behaviour.
- In relation to application for the enrolment of children with special needs, it is open to the Board of Management to request a copy of the child’s medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available, to request the child to be assessed immediately. (See “Enrolment of Children with Special Needs’ Section)
- The Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent/guardian(s) by letter, as soon as practicable, but not later than 21 days from the formal enrolment date.
- If offered a place in the school, replies of acceptance or non-acceptance of place must arrive in the school by the date specified in that letter. Failing to reply by the appointed date may result in loss of place.
- Depending on the uptake of the first round of offers, further offers may be made as places become available.
- Parent/guardian(s) of child enrolled in Junior Infants will be invited to an information meeting in the school, followed by an open afternoon for parent/guardian(s) and child.
- Parent/guardian(s) is requested to inform the school, as soon as practicable, if, at a later date s/he wishes to decline an offer of a place in the school for their child.
- Placement in class, involving registration, completes the “Admission” process.

Failure to comply with the requirements of the admission process may result in non-admission.

(ii) Process for Decision Making for enrolment of **Junior Infant Pupils:**

In the event that applications for admission exceed / are expected to exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment to Junior Infants.

- Priority 1. Catholic children living within the parish. If the class is over subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
- Priority 2. Brothers and sisters of children already enrolled (including stepsiblings, resident at the same address), provided that address is within the parish. If the class is over subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
- Priority 3. Children of current staff. If the class is over subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
- Priority 4. All children who live within the parish boundaries but are not Catholic. If the class is over subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
- Priority 5. Catholic children from outside the parish. If the class is over subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.
- Priority 6. Brothers and sisters of children already enrolled (including stepsiblings, resident at the same address), from outside the parish. If the class is over subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant until all places are allocated.
- Priority 7. All children who apply to the school and are not Catholics and not resident in the parish. If the class is over subscribed on the basis of this criterion, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated.

(iii) Students Transferring:

Subject to School Policy, available space and in some cases the approval of the Department of Education and Skills, the Board of Management will accept students during the year. (See Section 2.3)

Pupils may be enrolled during the school year if newly resident in the area and transferring from another school. They may be enrolled subject to the Rules for National

Schools, Education Welfare Act and this School's Admissions and Participation Policy. Proof of residence is required. (See Appendix 4)

When an application is made in respect of students between the ages of 4 and 6 years, the Principal shall ascertain from the parent whether the child was previously enrolled in another National School and, if so, will request the parent to obtain a certificate to that effect from the Principal teacher of the school which the student previously attended.

The Board of Management will request information concerning attendance and the student's educational progress from the previous school attended in respect of any student transferring.

If/When enrolled, children are placed in a class appropriate to their age.

The Board of Management determines the maximum number of children in the school and in a class based on the Department of Education and Skills recommended enrolment at the time. (See Appendix 3)

(iv) Re-Enrolling:

A student removed from the rolls shall, at any time after s/he was so removed and at the request of his/her parent/guardian(s), be re-enrolled in the school, notwithstanding any alteration to the enrolment policy in the school which may have occurred during the period when the child was not on the rolls, and subject only to there being a place available in the school.

(v) Children of other faiths or no faith:

Bearing in mind the Catholic ethos of the school, every effort will be made so that the school is as inclusive as possible. While Catholic education and the ethos of the school permeate the day, children of other faiths or none, where request is made in writing, will be excused from attendance at formal religious instruction classes and specifically Catholic liturgies. As far as is possible, in consultation with parents, suitable alternative arrangement may be made in order to facilitate this. It will not be possible however to provide religious instruction in other faiths.

(vi) Enrolment of Children with Special Needs:

Children with Special Needs are welcome to enrol in the school and every effort will be made to provide them with an appropriate education as well as to include them in every aspect of school life. The child enrolling in SS Michael and Peter JNS, Arklow will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills to the Board of Management.

In relation to application for the enrolment of children with special needs, it is open to the Board of Management to request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such report is not available to request that the child be 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 special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report, the Board of Management should assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. When the Board of Management deems that further resources are required, it should, prior to enrolment, request the Department of Education and Skills to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report.

These resources may include, for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, resource teacher for special needs, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other. The school should meet with the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs.

Prior to admission or at any other time during the child's education, the Board of Management may consult with the parent/guardian(s) and decide, in exceptional circumstances, to review the participation in the school day, with a view to phasing in the participation of the child. This phased participation would be reviewed on a regular basis. If necessary, a full case conference involving all parties should be held, which may include parents, principal, class teacher, learning support/resource teacher for special need or psychologist or social workers as appropriate (SEN Policy).

(vii) Deferring Enrolment:

It may be necessary for the Board of Management to decide to defer enrolment of a particular child, pending:

- The receipt of an assessment report; and/or
- The provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education and Skills to meet the needs specified in the psychological and/or medical report.

(viii) Exceptional Circumstances:

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to a pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

1. The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education.
2. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk, to other pupils, to school staff or to school property. (See School's Safety Statement).

Prior to admission or at any other time during the child's education, the Board of Management may consult with the parent/guardian(s) and decide, in exceptional circumstances, to review the participation in the school day, with a view to phasing in the participation of the child. This would be considered where a pupil's behaviour is such as interferes with his/her right to education or that of other pupils or with his/her safety or that of other pupils and/or staff.

This phased participation would be reviewed on a regular basis, participation being increased, maintained, or decreased in line with targets being achieved or not and would continue until such a time as the pupil ceases to present such challenging behaviour. This intervention would form part of an Individual Learning Plan and be in consultation with the Parent/guardian(s), Túsla and the National Educational Psychological Service and would involve the support of the School's Learning Support Department and other relevant outside agencies, if necessary, and would be in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour and other relevant policies.

Section IV Appeals Procedure

In line with Section 28 of the Education Act 1998, parents who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. This appeal must be addressed, in writing to the Board of Management, 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. An appeal form will be issued by the school to the parents/guardians. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol.

Evaluation and Review of SS Michael and Peter JS Admission and Participation Policy

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this Enrolment Policy.

The policy will be reviewed, amended and updated as required.

The policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting in September 2016.

Mr. James Dunne

Chairperson Board of Management

Appendix 1

- Decisions in relation to application for enrolment are made by the Board of Management in accordance with school policy.
- The Board of Management reserves the right to:
 - Decide on the date of formal enrolment in the school
 - Set the final date for enrolment each year
 - Determine the age of entry in a given year
 - Determine the maximum number of children in the school based on the Department of Education and Skills recommended enrolment at the time.
 - Determine the maximum class size.
- As a general principle, and in so far as is practicable, having regard to the school's Enrolment/Admissions and Participation Policy, children will be enrolled on application provided that there is space available.
- The Board of Management shall have regard for any relevant Department of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to class size or staffing provisions, and/or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation such as physical space or the health and welfare of students.

- The Board of Management is bound by the Department of Education and Skills Rules for National Schools, which provides that children may only be enrolled from the age of 4 upwards. The child must be 4 years of age on the 1st September. This is in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills regulation re age of entry to First Class being 6 years of age.
- Normally Junior Infants will not be enrolled during the year unless transferring from another school and this decision will be in accordance with this school's Enrolment/Admissions and Participation Policy. This is for educational reasons as the curriculum is progressive and it is necessary for the child to complete one year.
- Children are placed in classes appropriate to their age.
- In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special needs, it is open to the Board of Management to request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available, to request the child to be assessed immediately. (See Enrolment of Children with Special Needs section).
- No child is refused admission on account of social position of his/her parents, for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status or religious beliefs.
- No students will be kept apart from other students on the ground of social distinction for reasons of ethnicity, special education needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status or religious beliefs.
- The Board of Management requests Parent/guardian(s) to sign the Enrolment/Admission and Participation Form that all school policies and procedures are acceptable to them, that they have read the Code of Behaviour and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with them by the child, in an age appropriate way.
- Parent/guardian(s) is expected to support their student's full participation in all aspects of the school curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills. (See Section II).
- When leaving the school, results of standardised tests and teacher report will be passed to the school, in which the child has been registered.
- Relevant school policies
 - Health and Safety
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Anti Bullying
 - Special Needs Education
 - Curriculum Plans
 - Child Protection
 - ICT Policy
 - Substance Use & Misuse Policy
- Relevant Legislation

- Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- Equal Status Act 2000 and 2004
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulation
- Children Act 2001

Appendix 2

Provision of Key Information by Parents/Guardians

- Pupil's Name, Age, Date of Birth, Address
(Please note: Pupils are enrolled / registered according to name on Birth Certificate)
- Parent/guardian(s) Occupation (for completion of Department Register)
- Parent/guardian(s) PPS number.
- Marital Status of parents
- Name of Family Doctor
- Whether Medical Card Holder
- Name and Address of Pupil's Parents/Guardians
- Contact Telephone Numbers and email address
- Contact Telephone Number in Case of Emergency
 - Details of any Medical Condition, of which the school should be aware

- Details of any relevant condition, which may affect the child's ability to benefit from school
- Religion
- Laterality - Right or Left Handed.
- Documentary Information re Barring Orders etc(Copy of relevant section of court order to clarify its impact on the school, or written signed, details of informal arrangement between parents as to the custody of and/or access to the children, supported by a letter from a solicitor)
- Information re Previous Assessments
- Previous Schools Attended, if any and reasons for transfer, and reports from previous school if transferring
- Any other relevant information (including any such information as may be prescribed under the Education Welfare Act 2000)
- Additional Information
Permission re Stay Safe Programme/Swimming/Child's Photographs/
Local Trips/Diagnostic Testing/English Language Support, Year of arrival in Ireland (where relevant), Permission where applicable to pass on Baptismal Certificate to Parish for Sacramental Purposes.

Appendix 3

The school is full when the current student/teacher ratio multiplied by the current number of classes enrolled has been reached.

The enrolment of a student, when the school is full may only be accepted when the classes into which the student's parent/guardian(s) requests enrolment has less than 28 students and taking into consideration the conditions as outlined in Section 2.3 and the capped number of students as decided by the Board of Management.

A Class is full when there are 28 students in the class. An exception to this occurs when classes have to be redistributed as a result of increase in the student teacher ratio as decided by the Department of Education and Skills and may therefore be greater than 28 students. This occurred in the 08/09 school year and continues to have an effect on management of pupil numbers.

