

## **Admission Policy of SS Michael and Peter Junior School**

**School Address: Hickey's Hill, Arklow, Co. Wicklow Y14HY40**

**Roll number: 20470c**

**School Patron/s: Archbishop of Dublin**

### **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 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020. 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 SS Michael and Peter Junior School's 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

SS Michael and Peter Junior School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

“Catholic Ethos” in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of SS Michael and Peter Junior School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

### **SS Michael and Peter Junior School Mission Statement**

The school recognises the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and strives to promote the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual development of its pupils so that all may achieve their full potential.

## 3. Admission Statement

SS Michael and Peter Junior School 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.

SS Michael and Peter Junior School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

SS Michael and Peter Junior School is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

#### **4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

SS Michael and Peter Junior School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established two Primary Age classes and one Early Intervention Class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

#### **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

SS Michael and Peter Junior School is a Roman Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic Faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special classes attached to SS Michael and Peter Junior School provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

Children are eligible to attend the Primary Age classes from 4 – 9.  
Children are eligible to attend the Early Intervention ASD Class from 3 – 5. (A child must be in Junior Infants in the school year that they turn 6)

The school may meet with the parents of a child to discuss the child's needs after enrolment and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. Parents may be asked to complete a questionnaire outlining the pupil's needs, likes, dislikes, areas of difficulty etc.

If necessary, a full case conference involving all parties should be held, which may include parents, Class teacher, Principal, resource teacher for special needs, or psychologist as appropriate.

The Board of Management also reserves the right to suspend or expel a child under 'Health and Safety' regulations and in conjunction with the school 'Code of Behaviour' and taking cognisance of relevant clauses in the Education Welfare Act 2000.

All placements are subject to review at the request of the parents and/or the school. The review will include input from psychological services e.g. Lucena, Beechpark, NEPS, the parents/guardians, and the school. Following the review, a recommendation may be made that the child be enrolled in a school that can meet his/her needs.

Reports: The Board of Management of SS. Michael and Peter Junior School insists that before children can be enrolled from other national schools parents/guardians must provide all previous reports to ensure children are placed in the proper class for their age and ability.

Prior to coming to a decision on enrolment numbers, the BOM reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each class bearing in mind DES maximum class average directives.

## **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:

### **Mainstream Applications**

Priority 1. Siblings and stepsiblings of children already enrolled in the school and children resident in the parish of Arklow (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)

Priority 2. Children of school staff. (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)

Priority 3. Children living in the Arklow urban area. (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)

Priority 4. Children residing outside the parish of Arklow (the eldest child will also have priority).

### **Special Class Applications**

Priority 1: Pupils who previously attended the ASD class in SS Michael and Peter Junior School and following a period of full integration in a mainstream class in SS Michael and Peter Junior School have been reassessed and have a recommendation of enrolment in the ASD class.

Priority 2: Pupils currently enrolled in a mainstream class in SS Michael and Peter Junior School who receive a diagnosis of ASD and a recommendation for special class with ASD placement.

Priority 3. Pupils who attended the Early Intervention Class in SS Michael and Peter Junior School for a period of two years with a recommendation for a primary age special class placement. (Priority will be given in order of criteria 5-9 below)

Priority 4. Pupils who attended the Early Intervention Class in SS Michael and Peter Junior School for a period of one year with a recommendation for a primary age special class placement. (Priority will be given in order of criteria 5-9 below)

Priority 5. Brothers and sisters of children currently attending (including stepsiblings, resident at the same address) who have a diagnosis of ASD with a recommendation for a primary age ASD special class placement.

Priority 6: Children who live within the Arklow parish boundaries who have a diagnosis of ASD with a recommendation for a primary age ASD special class placement.

Priority 7. Children of current staff who have a diagnosis of ASD with a recommendation for a primary age ASD special class placement.

Priority 8. Children living in the Arklow urban area who have a diagnosis of ASD with a recommendation for a primary age ASD special class placement.

Priority 9: Children living outside the parish and urban area of Arklow who have a diagnosis of ASD with a recommendation for a primary age ASD special class placement.

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:

#### **Mainstream and Special Class Applications:**

In the event of two or more students being tied for a place, the oldest student will be given priority. If two applicants have the same date of birth, then a lottery will apply with an independent party present.

The Special Classes for children with a diagnosis of ASD in SS. Michael and Peter Junior School operate under the following conditions:

- The maximum class size is 6 pupils. Each class has 1 full time teacher and 2 Special needs assistants (SNAs). If class size is less than 6 pupils, SNAs are appointed on a pro- rata basis.
- The classes provide an educational programme suited to the needs of students whose cognitive ability lies within or above the Mild General Disability Range
- Children are eligible to attend the Primary Age classes between the ages of 4 and 9 years only.
- Children are eligible to attend the Early Intervention Class between the ages of 3 and 5. A Child must be enrolled in Junior Infants in the school year they turn 6.
- A child may be phased in gradually to these classes through a mutually agreed process between the school and the parents of the child.
- The school reserves the right to review the child's progress after each year to determine whether this is an appropriate placement for the child.

## 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:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at an early intervention class.
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to admission to a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned. In order for a child to be enrolled in a Special Class for Children with Autism, he/she must fully fulfil the following criteria at the time of enrolment:
  1. A recent psychological assessment or a report from a member of a multi-disciplinary team should be provided. There must be a recommendation by a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. ("Multi-Disciplinary Team"). Please note all reports in operation for a child should be provided to the school, for consideration by the Admissions Team. The withholding of reports from the school Admissions Team may invalidate an Enrolment Application at any time.
  2. The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder without significant intellectual impairment made using the DSM-V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team.
  3. If the child also presents with a general learning disability, it must fall within the mild range. This diagnosis must also be made using a professionally recognised clinical and psychological assessment procedure and cannot be dated more than two years prior to the proposed admission date.
  4. In the event of an application being made to enrol where a child is deemed by a psychologist, to be too young to undergo a cognitive assessment the place will be offered subject to the eventual outcome of this assessment.

- (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) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than siblings of a student attending or having attended the school as per Enrolment Criteria.
- (g) 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## 8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to SS Michael and Peter Junior School 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

(Please see [section 14](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 15](#) 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.

## 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. (see [section 18](#) below for further details). This review/appeal should be requested within three weeks from the date the notification of refusal is issued.

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

In accepting an offer of admission from SS Michael and Peter Junior School 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 SS Michael and Peter Junior School 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.

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).

### **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 SS Michael and Peter Junior School 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 SS Michael and Peter Junior School 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.

### **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.

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 Section 13.

### **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:

All applications for admission received for any class as outlined in the annual admission notice/Sections 5 and 6 above, 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.

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:

All applications for admission after the commencement of the school year as outlined in the annual admission notice/Sections 5 and 6 above, 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.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of SS Michael and Peter Junior School 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:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting / phone call 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.

## 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. This review / appeal should be requested within three weeks from the date the notification of refusal is issued.

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. This review / appeal should be requested within three weeks from the date the notification of refusal is issued.

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. This review / appeal should be requested within three weeks from the date the notification of refusal is issued.

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. This

review / appeal should be requested within three weeks from the date the notification of refusal is issued.

The NPC is available to provide advice to parents/guardians in relation to this.

### **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.

The NPC is available to provide advice to parents/guardians in relation to this.

### **Approval and Ratification**

The Policy was approved by Monsignor Dan O'Connor and Declan Lawlor on Tuesday, 22/09/2020 and is so noted in Board of Management Minutes.

Lisa Dempsey, Principal

Kerry Ward, Chairperson