

**Admission Policy of
St. Helen's Junior National School**

School Address: Limetree Avenue, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin D13 KP93

Roll number: 19578P

School Patron: Catholic Archbishop of Dublin

1. Introduction

Welcome to St. Helen's Junior National School. 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. All parents and staff were notified of the requirement to review and amend current policy. 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.

This policy aims to provide a fair, equitable and transparent process for all applicants in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of Education and Skills. The policy was approved by the school patron on 10th March 2023. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Helen's Junior National School's admission process are set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice (see appendix) 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. Helen's Junior National School is a Catholic co-educational Primary School under the patronage of Archbishop Dermot Farrell.

In St. Helen's Junior National School we strive to provide a safe and happy learning environment, which enables all pupils to reach their personal, academic and creative potential, through a rich variety of educational experiences.

St. Helen's Junior National School has 1 pre-school and 2 outreach classes which cater for pupils on the autistic spectrum (AS). The purpose of these classes is to develop an educational setting which focuses on the needs of all the children in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act, 2000 (EPSEN 2000). The aim of the classes is to promote growth and learning in an atmosphere of inclusion and mutual respect by focusing on pupils' strengths, and to identify and provide for their special educational needs.

The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and of participation in school life, with respect for diversity of tradition, values, beliefs and ways of life in society. We endeavour to create a sense of environmental awareness, respect and care within our school and the wider community.

The Catholic ethos permeates the school day and reflects the living faith of pupils and staff and is characterised by the caring interactive relationship among the whole school community. "Catholic Ethos" in the context of St. Helen's Junior National 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 the 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
- e) 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 St. Helen's Junior National 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.

Religious Education is a core subject on the school curriculum and an integral part of the school. We aim to encourage a high level of empathy, respect and kindness towards others through positive behaviour strategies, supported by the Grow in Love Programme. Prayer and preparation for the Sacramental experience play an important role in our school. We celebrate together to mark key liturgical times of the year and encounter our Gospel values during daily R.E. classes, through the presence of sacred spaces within the school, and weekly whole school assembly.

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated each year and is a time of importance where we also mark the special role of Grandparents within our school community.

The school is funded by grants from the Department of Education and Skills. The national Primary School Curriculum (www.ncca.ie) is taught from Junior Infants to 2nd class.

3. Admission Statement

St. Helen's Junior NS 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. Helen's Junior School 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. Helen's Junior School 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.

St. Helen's Junior NS is a school which has established one pre-school and two outreach classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, for children on the Autistic Spectrum and may refuse to admit a pupil who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

St. Helen's Junior NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established one pre-school and two outreach classes to provide an education exclusively for students on the Autistic Spectrum.

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 pupil.

St. Helen's Junior NS is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit a student as a person who is not of Catholic Denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The three special classes attached to St. Helen's Junior NS provides an education exclusively for students on the Autistic Spectrum 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.

Places in AS classes will be allocated to a maximum of 6 children per class, on condition that the necessary resources are provided, by the National Council of Special Education (NCSE), the Health and Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

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.

In the case of the Mainstream classes

The Board of Management will decide on a cut-off date of birth for all applicants on an annual basis giving priority to the eldest children. (This will apply in each of the criteria set out below).

1. Brothers & Sisters of children already enrolled and
1. Children ordinarily resident at an address within the *parish boundaries (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)
2. Children of Staff members (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)
3. Children from St. Marnock's catchment area who cannot be accommodated in their local school.
4. Children outside the Parish of St. Helen's Junior National School (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)

In the case of the Pre-School AS class

The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, which may vary from year to year.

1. The child must have a psychological assessment report which confirms a diagnosis of AS and recommends placement in an AS pre-school class.
2. Brothers & Sisters of children already enrolled.
3. Children ordinarily resident at an address within the *parish boundaries.
4. Children outside the Parish boundaries (priority will be given based on proximity to the school).

In the case of the Special Classes (2 Outreach AS classes)

The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, which may vary from year to year.

1. Children transitioning from pre-school class in St. Helen's Junior NS (Children enrolled in the pre-school will not automatically transfer to an outreach class. Such a transfer is dependent on a written transitional psychological report recommending such a placement).
2. The child must have a psychological assessment report which confirms a diagnosis of AS and recommends placement in an AS class.
3. Brothers & Sisters of children already enrolled.
4. Children already enrolled in St. Helen's Junior NS with a diagnosis of Autism and a recommendation for a special class and are not managing the mainstream setting.
5. Children ordinarily resident at an address within the *parish boundaries.
6. Children outside the Parish (priority will be given based on proximity to the school).

***Parish Enrolment.**

For the purpose of enrolling pupils in St. Helen's Junior NS, St. Helen's Senior NS and St. Marnock's NS, the three Boards of Management and parish authorities have agreed the proper organisation of primary education in Portmarnock is best served by the division of the parish into two catchment areas. While respecting the principle of parental choice of school, (Section 15(2) of the Education Act 1998) the Boards of Management believe that it is in the best interest of pupils to attend their designated school. Accordingly, the parish of Portmarnock is divided into two catchment areas.

St. Helen's catchment area includes Strand Road north of Burrow Court, Upper Carrickhill, Martello Estate, Hillcourt, Dal Riada, Torcaill, Carrickhill Road north of Carrickhill Heights, Blackwood Lane and the road leading to Old Portmarnock north of the railway bridge located beside Hazelwood garage on the back road.

St. Marnock's catchment area extends northwards from St. Marnock's School as far as, and including Beech Park, Burrow Court, Carrickhill Heights, Woodlands, Pine Court, Ardilaun, Lower Carrickhill, Carrick Court, Strand Road south of Burrow Court, St. Anne's Square, Strandmill, Station Road, Drumnigh and Old Portmarnock south of the railway bridge located beside Hazelwood garage on the back road.

All enrolments in Parish schools to be made in accordance with the agreed policy except as follows.

A. In the case of parents who currently have a child attending a school outside their local catchment area, it will be open to those parents to continue to send their child to his/her present school or to enrol the child in their local school, subject to availability of space.

B. If there is no space for their child in the local school, the child may be enrolled outside the catchment area.

C. In the case of (B) the parents may subsequently transfer a child back to their local school subject to availability of space.

D. In the case of (B) the parents may subsequently choose to enrol younger children in the school of their first child or in their local school.

The siblings of children enrolled in a special class may enrol in the school in which the special class is located. In the matter of enrolment it is emphasised that all parents have the right to appeal to their local Board of Management.

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 classes

If the number of applications for enrolment exceeds the number of places available, the Board of Management will process all completed applications and will decide on a cut-off-date-of- birth for applicants on an annual basis giving priority to the eldest child (as evidenced by their birth certificate).

If the above arrangement does not resolve the tie, an independent third party nominated by the Board of Management will draw the name of the next applicant from a hat.

Pre-school ASD class

A waiting list system will operate of the applicants who meet the criteria specified above. Enrolment in the pre-school ASD class can occur at any time in the school year.

Junior and Senior ASD classes

A waiting list system will operate of the applicants who meet the criteria specified above.

Enrolment in the outreach classes occurs on the 1st September parallel to enrolment in the mainstream classes.

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 the AS pre-school in the school.
- 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.
- 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;
- 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.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Helen's Junior NS 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).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Helen's Junior NS 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 are 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. Helen's Junior NS 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;
- 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.

St. Helen's Junior NS may share information on application forms with other schools for the purpose of determining likelihood of acceptance of offers and verification of address but not limited to these.

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. Helen's Junior NS 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. Helen's Junior NS 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:

If the school is not over-subscribed, and there is a place in the required class, the pupil will be allocated a place in the school on the basis that they fulfil the criteria mentioned in 6 above, and have provided the necessary enrolment form.

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

The Board of St. Helen's Junior NS 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.

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 pupils, where the parents/guardians who have requested that the pupil attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such pupils:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil 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 **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 may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission. There are a number of grounds for such an appeal and these include:

- where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

- 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.

Date of Approval by Patron

26/05/2023

Date of Implementation by school:

**September 2020
May 2023**

Review date:

28th February 2023

Signed:



**LORNA LAVIN
PRINCIPAL**



**CELINE O' CONNELL
CHAIRPERSON**

