

Junior Infant Application¹ Policy for the Schools of St. Conleth's Parish Newbridge. January 2015

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998. The Boards of Management trust that by so doing parents will be assisted in their understanding of issues relating to Applications.

The chairpersons of the Boards of Management and the principal teachers will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Newbridge has a total of 7 Catholic schools. The schools highlighted in bold print operate a common applications policy for junior infants.

1	Patrician Primary	Catholic mixed boys and girls for 2 nd to 6 th
2	St. Conleth's Infant School	Catholic mixed boys and girls for Infants to 1st
3	St. Conleth and Mary's School	Catholic mixed boys and girls for 2 nd to 6 th
4	Scoil Bhríde Athgarvan	Catholic mixed boys and girls for Infants to 6th
5	Scoil Mhuire Junior	Catholic mixed boys and girls for Infants to 2nd
6	Scoil Mhuire Senior	Catholic mixed boys and girls for 3 rd to 6 th
7	Scoil na Naomh Uilig	Catholic mixed boys and girls for Infants to 6th.

These are Catholic Schools under the patronage of The Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The purpose of these Catholic Schools (established in association with the Department of Education and Skills) is to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including the promotion of a living relationship with God and fellow human beings. The schools model and promote a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God. Catholic schools provide Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church and promote the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith. Thus the Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life.

While applicants in the schools are predominantly Catholic; children, whether of other faiths or none are welcome.

Parameters for the Policy:-

Schools operate by reason of and subject to the grants, teacher resources and accommodation provided by the Department of Education and Skills. They are governed by the appropriate regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Skills. School policy has regard to the teacher resources, accommodation and funding available which varies from year to year.

Schools follow the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998) and such statutory amendments which may be made thereto from time to time.

Application Criteria:-

¹ This is an application to the applications committee. Applications are made during the application season. Enrolments are administered by each school after the applications have been allocated. Offers are approved by the Board of Management when the applications forms have been considered.

Applicants must be at least **four years of age by August 31st** in the year they apply to enrol in a school. Compulsory attendance at school does not apply until a child reaches 6 years of age.

Application forms for junior infants are available at the Parish Office, Station Road, Newbridge.

- Applications must be returned to the Parish Office addressed to the Central Applications Committee no later than the date specified.
- Applications delivered to an individual school will be deemed invalid.
- Late applications will be in general processed by May and September of that year.
- The completion of an application form will not automatically entitle a child to a place in a parish school.
- False information furnished in an Application form will result in the application being deemed invalid.

The Central Applications Committee communicates arrangements regarding applications through:

- St. Conleth's Parish Newsletter
- School Newsletters from Scoil Bhríde Athgarvan; St. Conleth's infants School; Scoil na Naomh Uilig and Scoil Mhuire -
- School websites
- Local Papers

Decisions in relation to the allocation of applications are made by the Central Applications Committee in association with the Boards of Management.

The Central Applications Committee promotes the principles of:

1. Inclusiveness,
2. Equality of access and participation in the school;
3. Parental choice in relation to Applications;
4. Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.
5. The educational needs of all the children in the school.
6. The constitutional rights of children to an education and the rights of parents to send their child to a school of their choice.
7. Health and safety considerations for staff and pupils.

Within the context and the parameters of:-

- (a) The Department regulations and programmes;
- (b) The rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act 1998;
- (c) The provisions of section 14(b) (i) of The Equal Status Act 2000
- (d) The funding and resources available, and
- (e) The schools' Enrolment and class placement policies

Section 29 Appeal:-

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 any parent or guardian can appeal a decision of the Central Applications Committee/individual Board of Management where the decision is that a place in the school of choice cannot be offered. A member of the Central Applications Committee will explain to a parent what their rights are. The Section gives an independent facilitator and an independent committee an opportunity to adjudicate on the process. The findings of the independent facilitator and committee are binding on both parties. The appeals process does not cost either party any money.

Considerations for the allocation of places:-

While conscious of the right of parents to enrol children in the school of their choice in so far as is possible the Central Applications Committee has a responsibility to respect the rights of the pupils under the care of the existing Boards of Management. This requires balanced judgements which are guided by the principles of natural justice and the best interests of all the children in the school community. The Board of Management in consultation with the Central Applications Committee reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom, bearing in mind:

- Size of/available space in classrooms
- Educational needs of a particular age.
- Children being taught in multi-grade classes
- Presence of children with special educational needs
- Department of Education and Skills Staffing schedules
- Health and Safety considerations for staff and pupils.

Procedure for the offer of places:-

- Applications must be received during application season with closing date at the end of the school term, in December.
- The Central Applications Committee meets and considers the total number of applicants expressing a first preference for each of the primary schools.
- If the number of first preference applications to a particular school exceeds 95% of the number of places available in that school, the following criteria will apply: An agreed cut off date of birth in the following order of priority.
 - Oldest siblings (this to include step siblings resident at the same address and foster siblings resident at the same address)
 - Children of current school staff
 - Children living within a flexible catchment area to be decided on an annual basis.
 - If there is a surplus of applicants who have expressed a first preference for one school and there are spaces in another school children will be allocated their places in order of their preferences in round one.

Round one offer will be based on the number of places in each school. They will be approved by each Board of Management. Ninety-five per cent of the spaces available will be offered in the first round. The offers will be made by the Boards of Management in February. Parents may be offered a place in another school at this point. Parents not being offered places in the first round will be notified. They will be informed of the possibility of being offered places in second and subsequent rounds. Offers will continue to be made until ninety five per cent of the places are accepted

Round two will offer the balance of places by the end of May. If necessary the cut off date will be changed. The offers and cut off date will be approved by each Board of Management. Offers will be made to late applicants or to families who have become resident in an address in the parish subsequent to the first round of offers. Offers will be given to replace the children who have not accepted offers from round one.

Round three offers will be made as soon as practicable for September. Offers will be given to replace the children who have not accepted offers from round one and two. Offers will be made by the Boards of Management to late applicants or to families who have become resident in an address in the parish subsequent to the first and second round of offers. .

Explanatory Notes:-

Waiting list

The Central Applications Committee will have a Waiting List for the Parish schools involved. All places will be offered according to age – priority to the eldest.

Q. What happens if a child is offered a place in the second/third/fourth choice school?

A. Parents may

1. Accept the place offered in the school of second/third/fourth choice. Once a parent accepts a place in one of the parish schools the child's name comes off the waiting list.
2. Not accept the place in the school of second/third/fourth choice and remain on the waiting list for the school of first choice. However, it should be noted that limited number of places becomes available and these are offered in order of age- priority to the eldest. The waiting list remains in place until all classes are full.

Applications:-

Once the Applications Committee has determined who qualifies for a Junior Infant allocation in the Parish, each individual Board of Management determines which of the qualifying applicants will be enrolled in line with each individual school's Enrolment Policy.

Applications letters will have a copy of the application policy information appropriate to each school and the following appendices enclosed

All Enrolment forms when returned **must** be accompanied by

- An original Long Form Birth Certificate
- Roman Catholic Baptismal Certificate (if Applicable)

Acceptances must be submitted by a specified date.