

Enrolment and Admissions Policy

The Enrolment Policy of St. Thomas Senior National School, Jobstown was initially formulated in 1981 when the school first opened. It evolved as a result of meetings, discussions and consultation involving the Principal, the Board of Management (BOM) and the Whole School Community. The Board of Management is responsible for the running of the school in accordance with the Rules of National Schools and in compliance with circulars issued by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The enrolment policy is reviewed and is updated as necessary to cater for the growing needs of the parish of Jobstown.

Ethos of St. Thomas Senior National School

St. Thomas Senior National School is a Catholic school with a Catholic ethos. Over the years the Principal, the Board of Management, the teaching staff, the ancillary staffs, the pupils and the parents/guardians have worked together to create a positive and caring ethos throughout this school. This positive school ethos is based on mutual respect, on the quality of relationships - the professional relationships between the staff as a whole, the ways in which the staff members treat the pupils and parents/guardians and the way in which the pupils and parents/guardians treat the staff members. This caring ethos permeates all teaching and learning situations as well as all staff relations in our school and it contributes to the formation of strong and healthy relationships throughout the whole school community. It is in keeping with this positive school ethos that the enrolment policy was originally devised and is reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

“Every child is valued”

The Enrolment Policy of St. Thomas Senior National School was formulated in order to create and maintain a just and equitable system whereby parents / guardians in the parish of Jobstown, on application for a place for their child in this school are treated in a fair and non-discriminatory way, and whereby the pupils of Jobstown can gain admission to the teaching and learning environment of this school. The school caters for pupils from third to sixth class.

Equality of access underpins the enrolment policy of this school. No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special education needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status, religious/political beliefs, family or social circumstances.

Aims of Enrolment Policy

The Enrolment Policy of St. Thomas Senior National School was introduced for the following reasons:

- to provide equality of access and participation in the school to the children living in the parish of Jobstown
- to create a fair and equitable system whereby pupils can gain admission to this school.

- to create an inclusive structure of enrolment whereby pupils with a disability or other special educational need are treated with equality and dignity
- to create a non discriminatory system of enrolment whereby the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life among the people of Jobstown are valued and respected
- to create and maintain an atmosphere of respect and tolerance whereby the applicant for a place in this school feels valued and affirmed
- to give parents / guardians a choice in relation to the enrolment of their children.

General Information

The Enrolment Policy is being set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Equal Status Acts (2000-2004) and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) (2004).

The Board of Management trusts that by so doing, prospective parents / guardians will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters. The chairperson of the Board of Management, Mary Dalton and the Principal, Eithne O Shea, will be happy to clarify any matters arising from this policy.

School Name: **St. Thomas Senior National School**

School Address: **Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24**

Telephone No.: **01 – 452 6555**

Fax: **01 4597864**

Email: **stthomassns@gmail.com**

Denominational Character: **Roman Catholic**

Chairperson: **Ms. Mary Dalton**

Principal: **Ms. Eithne O Shea**

Name of Patron: **Archbishop Diarmuid Martin**

Number of Teachers: **36**

Classes Taught: **3rd – 6th class**

The school depends on grants and teacher resources provided by DES and it operates within the regulations laid down by DES. School policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

St. Thomas Senior National School follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998)

Within the context and parameters of DES regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act (1998), and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Opening and Closing Times

St. Thomas Senior National School opens at 9.00am and closes at 2.40pm each day.

First Break: 11.00 – 11.10

Second Break: 1.00 – 1.30

5th/6th class pupils are **not allowed** to leave the school during the course of the school day unless they have written /verbal permission from their Parent / Guardian.

3rd / 4th class pupils are **not allowed** to leave the school during the course of the school day unless accompanied by a Parent / Guardian or a person designated by the Parent / Guardian unless in exceptional circumstances

Application Procedures

Applications for places in third class in St Thomas Senior National School for the start of the new school year are made during a designated week in June of each year. During the designated week in June, parents/guardians who wish to enrol in St. Thomas Senior National School fill out an application form. As the majority of our pupils transfer from second class in St. Thomas Junior National School initial contact with parents is made through St. Thomas Junior National School.

The application form requires the following information:

- Pupil's name, address and date of birth
- Names and addresses of parents / guardians
- Contact numbers for both parents/guardians
- Emergency telephone numbers
- Nationality of the child
- Religion of the child

- Name of previous school/schools
- Reasons for transfer from previous school (if applicable)
- Details of any medical conditions which the school should be aware of
- Any special educational need or disability which the school should be aware of in order to prepare a place for the child
- Any other relevant information /issues the school should be aware of
- Information as may be prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

The application form must be submitted to the school and be accompanied by -

- **Child's Birth Certificate / Passport (unless transfer from Junior School)**
- **Copy of child's Baptismal Certificate**
- **Utility Bill.**

If any material information is deliberately withheld at the time of enrolment, the application will be deemed invalid. The application will be treated as incomplete until such time as further relevant information has been received. Such information / documentation will include reports from previous school, professional and or medical reports.

Parents / guardians are provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour and are requested to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure their child will comply with the Code of Behaviour. Children enrolled in the school are required to co-operate with and support the code of behaviour in the school as well as all the other policies on curriculum, organisation and management.

Pupil Transferring from St. Thomas Junior School

All pupils transferring from St. Thomas Junior School are guaranteed a place in the senior school. Every effort is made to ensure the smooth transition for pupils transferring from second class in St. Thomas Junior National School to third class in St. Thomas Senior National School. A transition programme has been devised and includes:

- Meeting with parents of incoming third class pupils in June of each year (2nd class pupils transferring from Junior School)
- Liaising with relevant staff in the junior school including Principal, Class Teachers, SET, HSCL and Support Programme workers
- Class visits and orientation programme for second class prior to transfer
- Files containing test results and attendance profile are received from junior school
- Educational Psychological and/or other relevant professional reports are received with parental consent

Pupil Transferring from another School

Pupils may transfer to St. Thomas Senior National School at any time during the school year subject to school policy, availability of space and in some cases, the approval of the Department of

Education and Skills. A parent/guardian who wishes to transfer his / her child to this school is required to fill out an application form and follow the procedures as outlined above.

The parent / guardian will be asked to supply reports and relevant information from the child's previous school and/or may be asked to sign a *Consent Form* giving this school permission to seek information including if relevant, professional reports from the child's previous school. It is a requirement of the Education Welfare Act Section 20 (5) (a) (b) that information concerning the child's educational progress and school attendance be communicated between schools.

All new entrants are tested in literacy on entry, to ascertain proficiency at entry and to identify any supports required.

Decision Making Process

While recognising the right of parents to make application to the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St. Thomas Senior National School has the responsibility to respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular the children already enrolled in the school. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interests of all the children.

The completion of an application form, however, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school. A response will be provided to parents/guardians who wish to enrol their child/ren in St. Thomas Senior School by the Board of Management within twenty one days of application.

Enrolment Criteria

The criteria for enrolment and the priority order in which children will be accepted in situations where the school may be oversubscribed is as follows:

1. Children transferring from St. Thomas Junior National School
2. Sisters / brothers of pupils in the school, sisters / brothers of past pupils of the school and Catholic children living within the parish.
3. Children living within the parish who do not fall into category 1 or 2
4. Children living outside the parish, but whose home address is closest to the school who do not fall into category 1 or 2

In the event that there are more applicants within any category than there are given places, priority will be given to children within the particular category in order of age, starting with the oldest.

Enrolment of Children with identified Special Educational Needs

Children with SEN enrolling in the school will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the DES to the Board of Management. The Board of Management will request a copy of any available relevant reports from relevant professionals including the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available will request that the child be

assessed immediately by the relevant body. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and or special care needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required. The Board of Management will endeavour to have all resources and supports in place before the child is admitted to the school. This may include visiting teacher service, SNA support, resource teacher support, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services etc. A child with defined SEN who is enrolled shall be prioritised in the school regarding allocation of resources.

The school will meet with the Parent / Guardians of the child and with the SENO to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. Where necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held, which may include Parent / Guardians, Principal, Class Teacher, Learning Support Teacher/ Resource Teacher for Special Needs, psychologist, relevant professional or social worker as appropriate.

Notwithstanding the availability of such resources, parents of children who are dissatisfied with level of educational provision in St. Thomas Senior School are advised to consider a special school which is designated and resources to specifically cater for the needs of children with SEN.

Prior to enrolment the school will acquaint itself to the best of it's ability with a child's SEN in a number of ways:

- As part of the transfer programme from the Junior School, a meeting between relevant personnel from both Junior and Senior School is held each year in May/June. Important information pertaining to children with SEN is exchanged at this meeting
- A meeting will be held between parents with high/low incidence SEN and the principal
- For children with low incidence SEN or as is deemed appropriate, contact will be made with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) psychologist and /or other appropriate agencies in order to access resources necessary to facilitate the inclusion of the child with SEN in this school.
- In order to facilitate a smooth transition to the school for pupils with SEN a number of steps will be taken as necessary. These may include visits to the school by parents and pupils, contact with previous school as necessary, implementing a buddy system and contact with special school or related services.
- If a child has a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) in the junior school, contact will be made with that person and if deemed appropriate, a meeting will be held with the SNA appointed in the senior school and the SNA from the junior school
- Information may be provided at a meeting in September when the third class teacher has an opportunity to meet with the teacher of the previous year
- Health and safety issues arising from a child's mobility and/or care needs will be identified and strategies developed to address them on an individual basis and as necessary
- For pupils with SEN who are new to the school and who did not attend the junior school, parents will meet the Principal / HSCL as necessary. The previous school will be contacted and copies of reports requested.

See Appendix – Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

The school has special classes for children identified by an educational psychologist as having general learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties. Priority will be given to children currently enrolled in mainstream classes in the school with a professional report recommending placement and in line with guidelines issued by the DES.

Refusal to Enrol

The school may refuse admission in exceptional circumstances for example, if the child has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the child with an appropriate education or if the student poses unacceptable risk to other students/staff/property.

Appeals

If enrolment to St. Thomas Senior School is refused, parents have the right to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998). Parents will be informed of the right to appeal by the principal on behalf of the Board of Management verbally and/or in writing. The details of the appeals procedure are outlined in Circular 22/2002 available from the DES.

Success Criteria

The success of the enrolment policy of St. Thomas Senior National School will be judged by its ability to provide equality of access and participation to this school to the children of Jobstown. The Principal, in consultation with the Board of Management, will monitor the numbers of pupils in individual classrooms on an ongoing basis and will have regard for the number of pupils, if any, on the Enrolment Waiting List. Application to DES for extra accommodation will be made by the Board of Management, if and when deemed necessary

Roles and Responsibility

The overall responsibility for the implementation and management of the Enrolment Policy of St. Thomas Senior National School rests with the Principal and the Board of Management with the support of and in conjunction with the Whole School Community.

Ratification & Communication

The Enrolment Policy of St. Thomas Senior National School was approved and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on Thursday 15th February 2007 having been discussed with representatives of the Whole School Community. It is available to all new applicants on request. Revised updates are available on line and are issued in hard copy on request to parents/guardians.

Implementation Date & Timetable for Review

The Enrolment Policy of St. Thomas Senior National School applies from 1st March 2007. It was reviewed in November 2007 and in September 2009, April 2011 and November 2015.

As a result of CPSMA Newsletter Issue 10: February 2011 concerning Enrolment Policy Review, the policy reviewed by the BOM was submitted to and approved by the Patron.

Ratified by Board of Management on 12-11-2015 .

Signed May Dale _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix: Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, (2004)

2. – A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature and degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with

(a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or

(b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated

