

St Joseph's National School Cong

ENROLMENT/ADMISSIONS POLICY

2025

Admission Policy of St Joseph's National School, Cong

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Roll number: 13686L

School Patron/s: Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. Frances Duffy.

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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 1st October 2025. 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 Cong N.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

As outlined in our Mission Statement - St. Joseph's National School, Cong is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. The school is committed to the aims and principles of the revised (1999) primary schools curriculum. It celebrates the uniqueness of each child as expressed in each child's personality, intelligence and potential for development. The school ethos seeks to nurture the child in all dimensions of his/her life - spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.

3. Admission Statement

Cong N.S. 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, 'gender ground', 'civil status ground', 'family status ground', 'sexual orientation ground', 'religion ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'ground of race' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Cong N.S. 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.

Cong N.S. 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.

Cong N S 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 part of the Roman Catholic Church and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Cong N S is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education, 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

(a) In the case of a mainstream school with a SEN class attached

Cong N.S. with the approval of the Minister for Education, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Multi-disciplinary Needs.

The current arrangements in relation to the category of special educational needs provided by the school will continue as in previous years unless otherwise directed by the NCSE or the Department.

Enrolment of children with special needs:

Special classes, as set out in NCSE guidelines, enable children and young people with more complex special educational needs to be educated, in smaller groups, within their local mainstream schools. They offer a supportive learning environment to children and young people who are unable to access the curriculum in a mainstream class, even with support, for most or all of their school day.

Admission to special classes should be based on the principle of children and young people with the more complex needs having access to the special class over and above children and young people with special educational needs who are accessing mainstream classes for most or all of the school day.

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for multidisciplinary needs, that is not oversubscribed, when the following is provided in support of such an application: Professional report(s) outlining:

Diagnosis of SEN (e.g., Multi-disciplinary report(s) diagnosing a range of complex needs)
AND

A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports.

AND

Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same

AND

A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for multi-disciplinary needs

The purpose of these reports is to assist the school in assessing the educational / training needs relevant to the child and to assist in drawing up a profile of necessary support services.

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

Cong N.S. is a Roman Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special class attached to Cong N.S. provides an education exclusively for students with Multi-disciplinary Needs 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.

6. Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

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:

Decision Making:

All decisions relating to enrolment policy are made by the Board of Management having due regard to school policy. The Education Welfare Act 2000 specifies that the board must notify parents of their decision within 21 days of receiving the relevant information.

In the event of over-subscription in classes, the following selection criteria will apply to children who are at least four years old on or before the 1st of April of their enrolment year. These criteria are listed as follows:

1. Pupils who have brothers or sisters currently enrolled.
2. Pupils who are already resident in the catchment area. (parish boundary)
3. Pupils whose siblings are past pupils
4. Pupils whose grandparents attended the school in former times.
5. Pupils who live outside the catchment area.
6. Pupils who apply for a placement outside of the stipulated times are entitled to be enrolled subject to places being available (considering P/T ratios) and after numbers 1-5 above have been allocated places.

Rolling waiting lists

Where a special class is oversubscribed, the Admissions to School Act 2018 requires schools to compile a waiting list for a special class in accordance with their admissions policy. The school must use this list to fill any vacancies arising during the school year in question only. If the school receive late applications for the special class, these applicants should be added to the bottom of the waiting list. These late applicants, even if they are already enrolled in the mainstream classes of the school or are local children and young people, cannot be prioritised over those on the existing waiting list for the special class.

Review of placements

The Department published Circular Letter 0023/2025 which sets out guidelines for schools on the review of students' placements in special classes. Schools are required to review placements on a regular basis and at least annually.

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:

1. Older children will have precedence – DOB
2. Children who reside within the closest distance to the school as determined on an OS map.
3. Draw lots - witnessed by school management.

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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
- (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 the Multi-disciplinary 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;
(other than the selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.
(In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).
- (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 Cong N.S. will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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 15 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and 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 Cong N.S., 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 Cong N.S. 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 board 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 Cong N.S. 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 Cong N.S. 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:

Pupils may transfer to this school at any time subject to school policy. The school is fully compliant with the provisions of The Education Welfare Act 2000 re presentation of child's attendance records and educational progress report

- The BOM reserves the right the delay admission until such a time that any necessary reports or documentation has been received by the school.

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:

Pupils may transfer to this school at any time subject to school policy. The school is fully compliant with the provisions of The Education Welfare Act 2000 re presentation of child's attendance records and educational progress report

- The BOM reserves the right the delay admission until such a time that any necessary reports or documentation has been received by the school.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St Joseph's N.S., Cong 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.

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 will then be arranged with the parents(s)/guardian(s) 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Principal, 1/10/2025
Michael Keogh
* Chairperson
Justin McLean
1/10/25

Appendix

St Joseph's National School Cong ANNUAL ADMISSION NOTICE

in respect of admissions to the 2026/27 school year

Admission Policy and Application Form

A copy of the school's Admission Policy and the Application Form for Admission for the 2026/27 school year is available as follows: –

To download at: <https://www.congns.ie/>

On request: By emailing secretary@congns.ie

Or writing to: St Joseph's National School, Cong, Co. Mayo F31XV80

PART 1 - Admissions to the 2026/27 school year.

Application and Decision Dates for admission to the 2026/27

The following are the dates applicable for admission to junior infants:

The school will commence accepting applications for admission on	February 16 th Parents of new applicants are invited in to enroll as per school policy and meet the infant teacher & principal on Mon 9 th / Tue 10 th from 1:30-3:30 pm. Note: Parents are advised to have appropriate documentation to hand such as PPS numbers and baptismal certificates if appropriate.
The school shall cease accepting applications for admission on	March 16 th (Mon)
The date by which applicants will be notified of the decision on their application is	March 30 rd (Mon)
The period within which applicants must confirm acceptance of an offer of admission is*	April 6 th (Mon)

*Failure to accept an offer within the prescribed period above may result in the offer being withdrawn.

Note: the school will consider and issue decisions on late applications in accordance with the school's Admission Policy.

Special Class Application and Decision Dates for admission to the 2026/27 school year

The following are the dates applicable for admission to the school's special class which caters for children with Multi-Disciplinary Needs

The school will commence accepting applications for admission to the special class on	6th October
The school shall cease accepting applications for admission to the special class on	3rd November
The date by which applicants will be notified of the decision on their application for admission to the special class is	24th November
The period within which applicants must confirm acceptance of an offer of admission to the special class is*	1st December

* Failure to accept an offer within the prescribed period above may result in the offer being withdrawn.

Number of places being made available in the 2026/27 school year

The number of available places in junior infants	12
The number of places being made available in the special class catering for children with Multi-disciplinary Needs	2

~ If the school has a number of classes that cater for different categories of special education needs, details of the numbers of places for each special class must be provided.

PART 2 - Admissions to the 2025/26 school year

(This section should only be completed if your school intake group/special class was oversubscribed in the previous school year)

Information regarding the admission process for the Intake Group for in respect of Cong N.S. junior infants for the 2025/26 school year

Breakdown of places allocated for the 2025/26 school year:	
Number of places available	9
Number of applications received	10
Number of offers made and accepted under each criteria	<p>A description of each criterion used and the number of places offered and accepted under that criterion must be entered here. Example, as follows: Criterion One: Applicants with siblings attending the school – 7 places offered, 7 places accepted. Criterion Two: Applicants living in the catchment area – 0 places offered, 0 places accepted. Criterion Three: Pupils whose siblings are past pupils – 0 places offered, 0 places accepted. Criterion Four: Grandparents past pupils – 0 places offered, 0 places accepted. Criterion Five: Applicants living outside the catchment area – 1 places offered, 1 places accepted. Criterion Six: Late applicants – 1 places offered, 1 places accepted.</p>
Total number of offers made	9
Number of names placed on waiting list	1