



## Enrolment Policy

*This policy has been formulated by Rathfarnham Educate Together National School to assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to child enrolment and to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills circulars.*

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## School Details:

Name: Rathfarnham Educate Together National School  
Address: Loreto Avenue, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14

Telephone: (01) 493 8677  
Email: info@retns.ie  
Roll Number: 19945Q  
Principal: Mary Carron

The school day starts at 8.50 a.m. and finishes at 1.30 p.m. for junior and senior infants, and at 2.30 pm for all other classes.

## General Information:

This policy has been set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 which provides for equality of access and participation in the school for all children in our society whatever their social, religious, cultural and racial background and whether or not they have a disability or special educational needs.

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School, RETNS, is under the patronage of Educate Together. Parents and guardians are advised to familiarise themselves with the Educate Together ethos prior to enrolling their child in the school. [See <https://www.educatetogether.ie/about/mission-and-values>]

The school, which is single stream, caters for children from junior infants to sixth class. It is co-educational and equality based. Rathfarnham Educate Together is a national school and as such operates in accordance within the Rules for National Schools and is dependent on such grants and teachers' resources as are provided by the Department of Education and Skills. All school policies must have regard to the resources and funding provided.

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

## Eligibility Criteria

Under the Education Act 1998, a child may not be allowed to attend or be enrolled in a primary school before the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his/her birth. In RETNS, children must be four years old on or before **31<sup>st</sup> March** of the year of admission into junior infant classes. [This rule came into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.] All children are required to start in education before their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday.

In RETNS, the earliest date on which a child's name may be entered on the pre-enrolment list is the date of his/her **second birthday**. [This rule came into effect for children enrolling from 5<sup>th</sup> November 2010.]

Siblings of children currently enrolled in the school are given priority over those on the pre-enrolment list subject to the conditions set out in the "Admissions Procedures" below. All

remaining places are offered on a first come, first served basis. Adopted or long-term fostered children will be considered as siblings for the purposes of the enrolment policy and admissions procedure. Parents who feel that their child's adoption or foster placement has delayed their pre-enrolment date should clearly indicate this on the pre-enrolment form as well as provide all documentation requested to this effect.

In determining admissions, the Board of Management/Manager shall take account of Department of Education and Skills regulations in relation to staffing, class size and class average. The Board of Management/Manager shall also have regard to issues such as physical space, multi-grade classes, and the presence of children with special educational and/or behavioural needs.

The enrolment policy of RETNS was reviewed and amended in March 2016. The amended policy will come into **full** effect for applications for enrolment for the start of the 2020 school year. All applications made prior to that date will be dealt with according to the policy in place at that time.

A transitional period will arise in terms of deferrals and transfers of applications to the 2019 school year from the 2018 school year which will affect an applicant's position on the pre-enrolment list. For the avoidance of doubt, during this transitional period, children will be placed on the pre-enrolment list in accordance with the enrolment policy that was in existence at the time that they pre-enrolled.

The Board of Management reserves the right to alter the enrolment policy of RETNS, subject to its statutory obligations, including its obligations to Educate Together as patron. Should the policy be altered in advance of the next full review, applicant parents/guardians will be advised in writing, and will be supplied with an amended policy. All such alterations to the policy will come into effect 30 days after the date of notification.

## **Admissions Procedures**

1. Day to day responsibility for managing enrolment rests with the school Principal and, in her absence, the Deputy Principal. The Principal will ensure that the school's enrolment policy is publicised on an ongoing basis. The Principal will be assisted where necessary by the Chairperson and members of the Board of Management in this regard.
2. Pre-enrolment is the placing of a child's name onto a waiting list for a future junior infants class in the appropriate school year. Waiting lists are operated where applications are made for places in classes between senior infants and sixth class.
3. Parents/guardians wishing to apply for a place for their child must complete and submit a pre-enrolment form. In RETNS, this is done online via the school's website where the form may be submitted. This form requires the parent/guardian to give the school certain information regarding their child.

4. Online pre-enrolment will be acknowledged within 7 days by computer generated reply. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure this notification is received and to notify the school immediately if it is not received.
5. On receipt of a completed pre-enrolment form, a pre-enrolment number will be allocated to each applicant. If more than one application form is received on a particular day, these numbers are recorded in the order of the time of receipt electronically. If the receipt time is the same, the children will be put on the admissions lists one after the other in alphabetical order of surnames.
6. Each child will be placed on the list according to the pre-enrolment number. If parents have twins, triplets, etc., the children will be put on the list one after the other in alphabetical order of the child's first name.
7. Two separate waiting lists will be kept for each year of admission, a junior infant and a non-junior infant list. Children will be listed in order of pre-enrolment number.
8. An applicant's place on a pre-enrolment list is indicative and may be subject to change in a situation where provision is made for a sibling preference under the RETNS enrolment policy as revised in 2016 which is effective from the 2019 school year and which will come into full effect from the 2020 school year. Deferrals of places to the following school year and transfers to the pre-enrolment list of the following year may also impact an applicant's place on the pre-enrolment list.
9. No guarantees of places are given or implied by pre-enrolment.
10. Children will, as a rule, only be admitted to a junior infant class during the month of September. Children may be admitted to a junior infant class during other months of the school year provided they are transferring from another school.
11. Siblings of children currently attending the school shall be given priority and offered places subject to availability provided that their applications were received within **14 days** of their second birthday and their names were placed on the pre-enrolment list in the usual manner. This time limit will be strictly applied. Applications for sibling places that do not meet this criterion will be added to the pre-enrolment list and be subject to the application of the pre-enrolment process in the usual manner of first come first served for non-sibling(s) without exception.
12. The sibling preference shall apply only to the junior infant class intake and the sibling(s) of the child(ren) applying for the junior infant class must still be enrolled in the school in the year of admission of the child(ren) to the junior infant class.
13. Class sizes are determined by the Board of Management in conjunction with and in the context of the guidance and policy of the Department of Education and Skills and the RETNS patron body, Educate Together. Class sizes will not be exceeded even if this results in a sibling or siblings on the pre-enrolment list not securing a place or places in a junior infant class.

14. Long-term fostered or adopted children will be placed on the pre-enrolment list in accordance with their birth date and will be considered as siblings for the purposes of this policy. Their place on the pre-enrolment list will depend on the time elapsed between placement of the child with the family and the enrolment date. For example, a child adopted at age three and 14 days and a pre-enrolment form completed at age three and 22 days would result in a pre-enrolment date of their second birthday and eight days as per the RETNS policy of applications being accepted only from age two. Confirmation from the relevant agency of the date of placement of a child with the family must be provided with the pre-enrolment form.
15. The Board of Management of RETNS reserves the right after due consideration to revert to an enrolment policy of "first come first served" without a sibling preference if it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of such a preference is proving detrimental to the operation and outcome of the enrolment process for the school.
16. Letters of offer will start being sent out in mid-January of the year prior to that for which the child is pre-enrolled. Parents/guardians must respond in writing/by e-mail to accept an offered place within 5 working days. Failure to respond within 5 working days will result in the place being forfeited.
17. An original copy of the child's birth certificate must be supplied to RETNS. The birth certificate is usually sought at the new parents' meeting following acceptance of an offer of a place in a junior infant class. RETNS will make a copy of the original birth certificate which will then be returned to the parents/guardians.
18. Parents/guardians of children who are offered a place in the junior infant class may defer the child's place to the following year's junior infant class, provided the child will be under six on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the year in which he/she is pre-enrolled. The child's name will be transferred to the pre-enrolment list for the following year of admission/pre-enrolment according to their original pre-enrolment date. Deferral of a place in the junior infant class does not guarantee a place in the junior infant class of the following year. Parents/guardians of children applying for a place in classes other than junior infants cannot defer a place.
19. If a place is not available in the junior infant class for an applicant child, the parents/guardians may opt to transfer the child's name to the pre-enrolment list for the junior infant class of the following year. It shall only be possible to transfer the application to the following year's junior infant class and not to the senior infant class or other classes.
20. If a place is not offered in the junior infant class for the school year in which a place is sought, the school will contact the parents/guardians to ask whether they wish their child's name to be placed on the pre-enrolment list for the following school year's junior infant class. Parents/guardians must respond in writing/by e-mail within 10 days. By doing this, the child will be placed on the pre-enrolment list for the following year according to their original pre-enrolment date. It is the

responsibility of the parent/guardian to respond in writing; otherwise the application will be removed from the school's pre-enrolment list without further contact from the school.

21. The number of applications on the pre-enrolment list for each school year shall not exceed 250. No further applications will be accepted once this number has been reached. Parents/guardians will be informed in writing within 28 days of receipt of their application that it has not been processed as a result of the maximum number of applications having been reached. This provision will come into immediate effect following ratification of the revised policy in 2016.
22. Where applications have been made for places in classes other than the junior infant class and parents/guardians wish to defer or renew the applications, such requests shall only be accepted one year in advance. Applications for places in classes other than the junior infant class shall expire at the end of the school year in which they were received, that is, parents/guardians seeking a place in classes other than the junior infant class must reapply each September.
23. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school promptly of any change of address, telephone number, e-mail address or other relevant circumstances.
24. If false or inaccurate information is provided by parents/guardians during the application process, RETNS reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place even if an offer has already been made and accepted.

## **Enrolment of Children with Special Educational Needs into Mainstream Classes:**

Where it is apparent that a child has a disability or other special educational needs, RETNS may require that these needs be assessed prior to admission in order to enable the school to make suitable advance preparations for the admission of the student and, if necessary, to seek additional resources.

RETNS will use the funding provided to it by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with a disability or other special educational needs, including, where necessary, alteration of buildings and provision of appropriate equipment.

RETNS endeavours at all times to practise its policy of inclusion as set out in its policy on special educational needs [<http://retns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Special-Needs-240215.pdf>] and welcomes applications from children with special educational needs. Such applications are subject to the enrolment principles outlined above. In order to assist RETNS in establishing the educational and physical needs of the child relevant to his/her ability or special needs, and to profile the support services required, RETNS requests that the parent/guardian of the child:

- Informs the school of any special needs as early as possible in the pre-enrolment/enrolment process.
- Ensures that copies of the child's medical and/or psychological report(s) are provided to RETNS.

Where such a report is not available, the parent/guardian should request that their child be assessed immediately. Following receipt of the report, the Board of Management/Manager will assess how the school can meet the needs specified therein. Where the Board of Management/Manager deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request that the Department of Education and Skills, DES, and/or the Health Service Executive, HSE, provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report.

The Principal may, in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) or Department of Education and Skills inspector, meet with the parents/guardians of the child to discuss the child's needs and the RETNS's suitability or capability in meeting those needs in terms of resources and facilities.

Applications for admission in respect of a child with a disability or other special educational needs will be refused where the nature of the child's needs are such that they would make impossible, or have a seriously detrimental effect on, the provision of education by the school to other children.

### **Code of Behaviour:**

Children enrolled in RETNS are required to co-operate with the school's code of behaviour and other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children co-operate with these policies in an age appropriate way.

Parents of children who are offered a place will be supplied with a copy of the school's code of behaviour. Admission of a child to the school is conditional upon the child's parent/guardians confirming in writing via e-mail that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them, and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with this code by the child.

### **Failure to Secure a Place:**

Parents may appeal a refusal of admission to the school to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

For further information, contact:

Section 29 Appeals Unit  
 Department of Education and Skills  
 Friars Mill Road  
 Mullingar

Co. Westmeath  
T | (044) 9337008  
W | [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

Parent who are experiencing difficulty in securing a place for their child should contact the National Educational Welfare Board to seek the assistance of their local Educational Welfare Officer: [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie) | [info@newb.ie](mailto:info@newb.ie) | 01 873 8700

### **Additional Information:**

RETNS endeavours to provide the highest standards of care for its pupils. In order to achieve this objective successfully, it is vital that the school be informed of any relevant situation regarding health, bereavement, domestic circumstances, etc. Any such information should be passed onto the school principal and shall be treated in strictest confidence.

### **Data Protection**

RETNS acknowledges its obligations as a data controller under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. Information obtained for the purposes of allocating places in the school to applicant children will only be used and disclosed in a manner which is compatible with this purpose. Only such personal data as are relevant and necessary for the performance of this function will be retained.

RETNS undertakes to ensure that such information is processed fairly, and that it is kept safe, secure, accurate, complete, and up-to-date. Individuals have the right to have any inaccurate information rectified or erased. A copy of all personal data obtained and kept as part of the admissions process will be made available to the subject of such data on receipt of a written request to the chairperson of the Board of Management.

### **Ratification and Review**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 21 April 2016. Amendments to section 16 were ratified on 9 May 2017, with notification issued on 17 May 2017 and the amendments coming into effect on 17 June 2017. The policy is scheduled for review in 2019. Educate Together, as patron, approved the manner of this policy's publication on 5 May 2016.

The Board of Management reserves the right to alter this policy, subject to its statutory obligations, including its obligations to Educate Together as patron. Should the policy be altered in advance of a full review, applicant parents will be advised in writing, and will be supplied with an amended policy. All alterations will come into effect 30 days after the date of notification.

### **Contacts**

Please refer all admission-related queries to the Principal.