

Admission Policy of St. Mary's College Galway

School Address: St. Mary's Road, Galway.

Roll number: 62980N

School Patron/s: The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora (Bishop Brendan Kelly).

• 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 **20th June 2020**.. 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 St. Mary's College 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.

• Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Mary's College is a Catholic all boys voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Diocese.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary 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 which school provides religious education in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic 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. Mary's 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.

Mission Statement: We aim to create a caring atmosphere where students are encouraged and helped to develop their unique gifts and talents. Working in partnership with parents and community, we strive, to ensure the intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional and social needs of each individual student is catered for. This statement is based on core values:

- Our school is a welcoming, secure and challenging learning environment.
- Education is a partnership between school, parents/guardians and students.
- Our purpose is to develop each students confidence, potential and moral values.
- The importance and value of all members of the school community should be at the heart of all decisions and actions.
- Every child in our care is entitled to learn in an environment, which is happy, caring and stimulating, where each individual can learn without fear of bullying or physical abuse, and where consideration, courtesy and respect is shown to all people at all times, in the context of a caring ethos.

• **Admission Statement**

St Mary's College will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

- the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- 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.

Single gender schools

St. Mary's College is an all-boys school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

Schools with special education class(es)

St. Mary's College is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, 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.

- **Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

St. Mary's College with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with a diagnosis of Autism.

- **Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details)
- 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

A school that admits students of one gender only

St. Mary's College provides education exclusively for boys and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

School with special education class(es)

The special class attached to St. Mary's College provides an education exclusively for students with Autism 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.

- **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:

- **Attain the required age of 12 by 1st January in the calendar year following his entry into 1st year.**
- **Siblings of current students.**
- **Children of current staff.**
- **To be from the catchment area.**
- **Normally have completed 6th class.**
- **Be willing, in conjunction with his parents/guardians, to accept the school ethos.**
- **Be willing in conjunction with his parents/guardians, to accept and support the Code of Behaviour. Confirmation, in writing is required to this effect.**

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:

The students with an eircode nearest the school will be offered the place.

- **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 student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí.
- the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school.
- 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.
- The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents.
- A requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- A student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school.
- 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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

• **Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Mary's College 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 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and 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.

• **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).

- **Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Mary's College, 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.

Applicants should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.

- **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. Mary's College where—

- it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- 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.
- 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
- an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out above.

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

- **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 data between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students. Section 66(6) allows a school 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).

- **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. Mary's College 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 [school name] 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.

- **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.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application not later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list.

- **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:

While it is appreciated that in certain circumstances transfers are unavoidable (e.g change of address, or family new to the area) as a matter of general policy transfers from other Post Primary schools into the school are discouraged in the overall interest of the continuity students education.

An application to transfer is defined as one from a student who has previously enrolled in another school. Currently it is not a policy of the BOM to accept transfer applications from students previously enrolled in other local Post Primary schools.

Applications from students wishing to transfer into the school should be accompanied by a letter setting out clearly the reason(s) for the application and the following documentation:

- (i) Completed school transfer enrolments form.
- (ii) The 2 most recent reports from the student's previous school.
- (iii) A written reference/report from the previous school.
- (iv) A statement of special needs if necessary.

(The college also reserves the right to request a confidential reference from the authorities in previous school(s).

Having due regard to the statutory and constitutional rights of of parents and their children, the BOM reserves the right to refuse any application in particular circumstances, which may include but is not exclusively confined to the following:

- (i) An established prior record of poor behaviour from previous schools.
- (ii) Lack of adequate resources to cater for particular needs of the student
- (iii) Insufficient educational attainment to participate in a particular course.

Applications to transfer into the school will be considered having regard to the overall wellbeing of all existing students and the availability of physical space and resources.

Following consideration by the school authorities of individual applications to transfer into the school, where the authorities have good grounds for forming the fair and reasonable opinion that it would not be in the best interests of the existing students and/or the application to accept such a transfer, it is the policy of the school to refuse to enrol such applicants. Applications will not be accepted from students who are the subject of ongoing disciplinary proceedings in another school which includes any ongoing statutory procedures in accordance with the Education Act 1998 or the Education (welfare) Act 2000.

In general, it is the policy of the school authorities not to accept transfers during the school year. However in the case of students whose family have moved into the catchment area and who are not enrolled in another Post Primary school, applications will be considered.

The Application form must be completed in full and signed by the relevant parties.

The college reserves the right to request other details relevant to the enrolment process.

Decisions will be notified to parents within 21 days after a parent/guardian has provided all relevant data as per section 19, Education Welfare Act 2000. The following factors will be considered in respect of applications.

- Class size
- Availability of staff.
- Availability of appropriate accommodation
- The rights of applicants
- The rights and welfare of existing students and staff within the school
- The Educational Attainment of the applicant having regard to the program which he wishes to enrol in.
- The previous record of attendance and behaviour of the applicant.

Right of Appeal:

An applicant who is refused enrolment has the right of appeal against the decision of the Principal of St Mary's College, to the Chairperson /manager of the Board of Management.

The appeal should be submitted to the chairperson/manager within 14 days of the date of the written notification of the refusal. Intended appeals should contact TUSLA who will put

them in contact with their local Educational Welfare Officer who will be able to offer advice and assistance on the appeal procedure.

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:

These are dealt with on a case by case basis in line with our enrolment policy and our section on Transfer Students above.

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

- **Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees**

The board of St Mary's College or any persons acting on its behalf shall not, except in accordance with section 64 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

Arrangements regarding students not attending Religious instruction:

The following are the schools arrangements for students, where the parent/guardians 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.

St. Mary's College provides Religious Education classes in line with our Deed of Trust. The Education Act (1998) insists that schools promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development, having regard for the characteristic spirit of the school.

Requests for exemption must be submitted within the first 4 weeks of the 1st year of enrolment.

At Mary's college will offer alternatives if possible from allocation and timetabling. If this is not

viable then students will sit in the class and allowed to complete homework etc.
For Religious service students will be permitted to attend a supervised study session while the service is on. Students not attending will have a written note in their school journal signed only by the Principal or Deputy Principal and shown to the supervising teacher for inspection.

- **Reviews/appeals**

Review of decisions by the board of Management/ School manager.

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 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, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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 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.

Appendix:

Application process for ASD class/classes.

(i) All applicants for our ASD class/classes must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/ASD. The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-IV or DSM-V or ICD-10. All applicants must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by relevant professional or a team approved by the DES, recommending the applicant as suitable.

(ii) You must indicate your intension to avail of the resources offered by our ASD class/classes at the time of application.

(iii) A prospective student for our ASD class/Classes must have a professional recommendation, from a NEPS psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multi-disciplinary team for placement in an ASD class/classes. These must be within the last 2 years. All applications in operation on a student should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions team/BOM/Manager. The withholding of such reports from the school authorities may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.

(iv) The BOM/manager require that parents/guardians must accept that the enrolment process only proceeds where the educational and physical needs of the applicants as defined can be met within our Asd class/classes.

(v) Parents/Guardians should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in our ASD class/classes is a maximum of 12 due to health and safety considerations. It should be noted that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily guarantee the student a place in St. Mary's ASD class/classes.

(vi) The ASD class/classes will only cater for students that are 12 years or more, and **less than 19 years of age, on the 1st September of the school year in question**. Exceptions to this would be with the permission of the school BOM/Manager.

(vii) Applications will only be considered in the year of entry to St. Mary's College.

(viii) The closing date for applications to transfer will be as for all other mainstream applications to the school.

(ix) The BOM/manager reserves the right to refuse an application for enrolment.

(x) The advice and support of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), and other relevant educational professionals, assigned to St. Mary's College, based on the needs of the applicant will be considered.

(xi) The decision of the school BOM/manager is final.

In the event of the number of suitable applicants exceeding the number of available places, preference will be given as follows:

- Sibling of current student

- A student who has a Parent who is a member of the school staff.
- Students attending primary school in the vicinity.
- A student who is attending a placement in a special class in a primary school and is recommended to have a placement within a specialised Asd classroom in a mainstream school.
- The recommendation of the SENO for the area based on the needs.
- If 2 or more students are tied for a place or a vacancy arises and there is more than one student for that place, the student who lives closer to the school will be offered the place. This decision will be based on the unique Eircode home address.

Refusal to Admit:

The BOM/manager may refuse the admission of a student if:

- There is no room in the ASD class/classes.
- The student does not have a diagnosis of Autism confirmed in a report by the relevant stakeholders.
- The school is unable to meet the needs of the applicant on grounds that: They are deemed a risk to themselves or others and admission of the student would make impossible, or have serious detrimental effects, on the provision by an educational establishment of its services to others.
- The student has needs that even with additional resources from the DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate educational placement.

Procedures for admission to mainstream 1st year:

Application forms are available from the school office on request. Application forms will also be handed out to prospective parents of first year applicants at an open evening which is held early in the year proceeding the school year for which the student wishes to enrol. Details are provided through the primary schools, local newspapers and radio.

The closing date for receipt of applications will be announced on an annual basis.

- New applicants to first year who enrol outside of specified enrolment period will be dealt with on a case by case basis, subject to the usual selection criteria.
- All other applications for enrolment will be dealt with under the policy relating to transferring students, as set out later in this policy.
- The school reserves the right to refuse a student admission if, in the opinion of the school authorities, the behaviour of that student is likely to have a detrimental effect on the provision of education to other students.

An aptitude test is carried out for internal school purposes. It should be noted that academic ability is not a consideration for admission and that this assessment is used to determine if additional supports will be required for students upon the enrolment in first year. All application forms must include the following details

(This information is requested by the Department of Education and Skills).

1. Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Full Address.
2. PPS number and Mother's Maiden name as required by the Department of Education and Science.
3. Parent/Guardian's names, addresses telephone numbers and an email address for one parent/guardian is required.
4. Emergency Contact Numbers.
5. Details of medical conditions, disabilities, special needs. Where an applicant has recognised special needs, parents/guardians should make application in March preceding the September intake, and supply copies of relevant reports or recommendations or assessments, to facilitate either provision of appropriate supports, or application to the Dept. of Education & Science for such supports. In some instances (e.g. where specialized equipment or alteration to the physical structure is required), it may be necessary for either the Board of Management, or the Principal acting on behalf of the board, to defer enrolment until relevant appropriate support arrangements are in place to meet the special educational needs of the intending student.
6. Names of other family members attending this school
7. Membership of the travelling community.
8. Nationality
9. Language exemption
10. Details of any care order
11. Previous schools attended
12. Medical Card details if any

(The school reserves the right to contact the current or previous schools of the applicant.)

Special Education Needs (S.E.N.) students and those with Disabilities are catered for in accordance with the Education Act 1998 (Part 1 Section 6a).

The school welcomes applications from students with special education needs. However, if the nature and degree of these needs is such that to enrol the students concerned would be inconsistent with both the best education interests of the applicant and the effective provision of education for the other students, the Board of Management or the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management will refuse admission on health and safety grounds. Acceptance and continued attendance in the college is based on the following:

- Parents/Guardians must actively support our school ethos and goals.
- Parents/Guardians must accept the Code of Behaviour and make all reasonable effort to ensure the student complies with the code.
- Students must follow the full timetabled programme. Exceptions are made for students who have reduced timetables in the context of special educational needs in conjunction with outside agencies.
- The school reserves the right to refuse a student admission if, in the opinion of the school authorities, the behaviour of that student is likely to have a detrimental effect on the provision of education to other students.
- To provide misleading or inaccurate information may result in disqualification of the applicant.

