



St. Mary's College Galway

Admissions Policy

Updated 4th June 2019

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Scope, Rationale and Legal Framework

The scope of this policy is to provide fair, transparent and effective criteria for the admission of students to St Mary's College in compliance with the legislative requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004.

The policy is based on the principles of:

- Parental and Student choice
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society.

Link to Mission Statement

St Mary's College is managed by a Board of Management which consists of representatives of the Trustees, the Parents and the Teachers.

We are an inclusive school both in our intake and in the curriculum which we provide. We aim to provide the highest standard of education for all our students.

We endeavour to fulfil our mission in partnership with parents/guardians, staff, students, trustees and the local community.

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.

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- Our purpose is to develop each pupil's 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.

Procedures for Admission into First 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).

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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

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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.

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Application procedure for Autism Spectrum Disorder Class

The Autism Spectrum Disorder Class is referred to as SONAS.

Application Process for SONAS

- (i) All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-IV or DSM-V or ICD-10. All applications must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by a relevant professional or a team approved by the DES, recommending the applicant as suitable.
- (ii) You must indicate your intention to avail of the resources offered by SONAS at the time of application.
- (iii) A prospective student for SONAS must have a professional recommendation, from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multi-disciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism specific class in an ASD Unit. All applications in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team/Board of Management. The withholding of such reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.
- (iv) The Board of Management require that Parents/Guardians must accept that the enrolment process only proceeds where the educational and physical needs of the applicants as identified can be met within SONAS.
- (v) Parents/Guardians should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in the SONAS at St. Marys' College School is a maximum of 10 students due to health and safety considerations. It should be noted that fulfilling the enrolment criteria does not necessarily guarantee the student a place in SONAS.

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- (vi) The ASD unit at St. Mary's College will only cater for children that are 12 years or more, and less than 19 years of age, on the 1st of September of the school year in question. Exceptions to this would be with the permission of the school board of management only.
- (vii) Applications will only be considered in the year of entry of the candidate to St Mary's College.
- (viii) The closing date for applications to transfer into Sonas will be as for all other mainstream applications to the school.
- (ix) The Board of Management 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 board of management is final.

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Transfers from other Post-Primary Schools

While it is appreciated that in certain exceptional circumstances transfers are unavoidable (e.g. a change of residence or a family moving into the area) as a matter of general policy transfers into the school are discouraged in the overall interests of the continuity of the student's education.

An application to transfer is defined as one from a student who has previously enrolled in another school. Currently it is not the policy of the Board of Management 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:

- (xii) Completed school transfer enrolment form.
- (xiii) The two most recent reports from the pupil's previous school
- (xiv) A written reference/report from the previous school.
- (xv) A statement on special needs, if relevant.

(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 parents and their children, the Board of Management reserves the right to refuse any application in particular circumstances, which might 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

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overall wellbeing of existing pupils 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 applicant 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/she wishes to enrol in

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- The previous record of attendance and behaviour of the applicant.

Right of Appeal

An applicant who is refused enrolment has a right to appeal against the decision of the School Authorities of St Mary's College to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Such an appeal should be made within 14 days of the date of written notification of the refusal. The appropriate forms and guidelines are available from the school secretary during normal school office hours. Intending applicants should contact the National Education Welfare Board 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.