

Admission Policy of Our Lady's School

School Address: Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow

Roll number: 17228B

School Patron: Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

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 originally approved by the school patron on August 5th 2020. It will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it. This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The relevant dates and timelines for Our Lady's School's admission process are set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice which is published annually at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned. Notices will also be placed in the Parish Newsletter, at the entrance in the local Play School and at the school entrances to notify parents that the school is accepting enrolment applications for the coming year.

The enrolment process is by written application only. The application form for admission will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it. Completed application forms should be returned by the date specified on the Annual Admission Notice. All applications must be fully completed for consideration.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Our Lady's School is an all-girls primary school with a Catholic ethos, which was founded in 1939. It operates under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills and under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Diarmuid Martin.

'Catholic Ethos' in the context of Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; and a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith; for which the school provides religious education for the pupils 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 Our Lady's School 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.

The school follows the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills. The parents and guardians of all pupils at Our Lady's School, by accepting places in the school, are deemed to accept the Code of Behaviour and ethos of the school on behalf of their children as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. These policies may be amended and revised from time to time and are available on request, from the office.

Within the context and parameters of the Department's regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out by the Education Act 1998, and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with disability or with other additional needs

Equality of access and participation

Parental choice in relation to the school, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school

Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

3. Admission Statement

Our Lady's School 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, '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.

Our Lady's School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values (Roman Catholic) and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the School.

Our Lady's School is not a Special School or a mainstream school with a special class attached. However, Our Lady's School is an inclusive school and children with additional education needs are educated within the mainstream system.

Our Lady's School will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its function under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the council.

Our Lady's School 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.

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

Our Lady's School provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

Our Lady's School is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

6. Oversubscription

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:

- Sisters/step-sisters of girls who are already enrolled in the school
- Siblings who have completed their education in Our Lady's school
- sisters/step-sisters of boys enrolled in Rathdrum Boys' National School
- girls resident in the Catholic Parish of Rathdrum, Greenane and Clara Vale (proof of address may be sought.) The eldest child will have priority in this ranking.
- Children of staff members - the eldest child will have priority in this ranking.
- Girls residing outside the Parish. The eldest child will have priority in this ranking.

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), children will be prioritised and enrolled in order of age, beginning with the eldest.

In the event of two or more students being tied for a place, the oldest student will be given priority. If two applicants have the same date of birth, then a lottery will apply with an independent party present.

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:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (e) a requirement that a student, 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 parent or grandparent having previously attended the school;
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, 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 Our Lady's School 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 section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 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.

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 Admission 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 Our Lady's School you must indicate in writing—

(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.

(iii) that you accept and shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the school's Code of Behaviour

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 Our Lady's School 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 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 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 Our Lady's School 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 Our Lady's School 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 Admission 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 no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13 above.

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 apply to transfer to the school at any time, subject to school policy and available space. Each such application will be decided by the Board of Management on a case by case basis but will normally only be considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area. All reports and relevant documentation from previous school must be forwarded when the parent accepts the offer of a place.

As with pupils transferring from other schools, pupils from other countries may transfer to the school at any time, subject to school policy, available space and Board of Management approval. In the case of children who are transferring from other countries however, experience has shown that in particular cases it may take 2 to 3 weeks of assessment by the school before suitable class level is determined. When the parents accept the offer of a place in the school, they are required to forward all relevant

reports and documentation from the child's previous school to assist staff in assessing suitable class placement.

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

The Board of Management of Our Lady's School 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.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Parents may wish to request that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) to discuss how the request may be accommodated. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of 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 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.

This policy was originally ratified by the Board of Management of Our Lady's School in July 2020.

It was reviewed and amended in December 2022.

Signed:

Rory Wilson (Chairman)

Date: _____