



St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow

# Admissions Policy

## Review dates

Board of Management	<u>Date Ratified by BOM.</u> 29-8-2017
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Date of next review: September 2018

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## **1 Operating Context & Rationale**

The Admissions Policy aims to provide clear and transparent procedures on student admissions into St. Marys Secondary School, Mallow. The school operates within the context of the religious and educational philosophy of the Mercy tradition and the values outlined in the CEIST Charter. The Board of Management supports and fully subscribes to the underlying principles of the to the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000, Education (Admissions to School) Bill 2016, the CEIST Charter and the Mission Statement of St. Marys Secondary School, Mallow.

## **2 Our Vision**

As a CEIST School St Mary's Secondary School *"is a faith community that is characterised by the quality of its personal relationships. A caring, welcoming school promotes a culture of good relationships where people thrive and grow. Relationships within the school aim to promote quality teaching and learning in an ordered and safe environment, where discipline, responsibility and accountability are achieved"*. We strive to build community with all the partners in education by fostering positive relationships with each other, maintaining professional standards, and by nurturing each student reach her full potential.

## **3 School Mission Statement**

St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow is a voluntary Catholic secondary school for girls only under the trusteeship of CEIST. In co-operation with the Department of Education, with parental and community support and within the available resources our mission is:

- To develop a community of learning which is geared towards the holistic development of each student;
- To foster the pursuit of academic excellence, respecting the specific potential and talents of each student;
- To promote within the school community the values of a Christian, caring society;
- To value, within the total school community, self-respect, respect for others and for the environment;
- To recognise and affirm the unique value and contribution of each individual.

## **4 Organisation, Programmes, Curriculum & Activities**

1. The school is grant-aided by the Department of Education.
2. The school is managed by the Board of Management, which is composed of four Trustee nominees, two Staff nominees, and two Parent nominees.
3. The school's educational programmes and the operation of the facilities, and its implementation of the school plan and policies, are subject to adequate resources and staffing allocations being made available by the Department of Education.
4. A Parent's Association and Student Council operate within the school in co-operation with the Board of Management.
5. The daily teaching hours of the school are from 8.45am to 3.50pm Monday, Tuesday and 08.45 am to 3.10pm Wednesday to Friday. Reception is open during these hours and can be reached at 022-21998 or [info@stmarysmallow.com](mailto:info@stmarysmallow.com) The school website address is [www.stmarysmallow.com](http://www.stmarysmallow.com).
6. Supervision of students outside of class time is composed of 08.30 to 08.45am, 10.10-10.25am, 1.05 -1.50pm, and 3.50-4.00pm / 3.10 3.20pm, except in the case of a school-sponsored activity or event. All students are expected to observe safety regulations and guidelines at all times.
7. The school requests an annual parental voluntary contribution per pupil to assist in meeting costs. The school may supplement its operating income by means of fund-raising activities.
8. St. Mary's School Prospectus sets out in detail the programmes, subjects, pastoral and other services, including extra-curricular activities, available in the school.

## **5 Students Who Are Eligible For Admission into 1<sup>st</sup> Year**

St. Mary's is an all-girls school which aims to provide an integrated and inclusive education. Students who are eligible for admission shall:

- a. Have reached the age of 12 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January in the calendar year following her entry to First Year.
- b. Have completed 6<sup>th</sup> class in Primary School or its equivalent.
- c. Be willing, in conjunction with her parents, to accept and participate in the school ethos.
- d. Be willing, in conjunction with her parents, to accept and participate fully in the curriculum provided.
- e. Be willing, in conjunction with her parents, to accept the school Code of Behaviour.

## **6 Application Procedures for Prospective 1<sup>st</sup> Year Pupils 2018**

- a. Application is by means of an Application Form only. Application forms for enrolment can be obtained from the school, downloaded from our website from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 and will also be distributed through the feeder primary schools in Categories 1 to 4 during the month of September of the year in which the child is in 6<sup>th</sup> class.
- b. An Open Information Evening for parents and prospective students is held annually by the school and is advertised. (Normally at the end of September of the year before starting school). Completed enrolment forms can be returned to the school during Open Evening.
- c. The school will, by prior appointment, meet parents who may wish to discuss the enrolment process.
- d. The school will set a closing date of Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 3.00pm for the receipt of applications. Forms must be returned to the school office only by the parent/guardian of the applicant and will be stamped and dated upon receipt. First Year places will be offered in writing in November 2017.

- e. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered unless places remain unfilled following the offer of places to valid applicants. A waiting list will be compiled if necessary but a place on the waiting list does not in any way guarantee a place in the school.
- f. Prospective students will sit an Entrance Assessment usually held in February.
- g. The school may request a meeting with a student and her parents / guardians as part of the enrolment process.
- h. All student enrolments are subject to the approval of the Board of Management.
- i. The school may seek other relevant information about a prospective student.
- j. The school authorities endeavour to provide an ordered environment, which fosters discipline and respect. Acceptance of a place in St Mary's is deemed to be an acceptance of the ethos, educational aims, code of conduct, school policies and disciplinary code of the school.
- k. Decisions on enrolment will be made by the Board of Management of the school through the Principal, to whom it delegates this task.
- l. The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application for admission.

## **7 Criteria for Enrolment**

- a. All applications for enrolment shall require the approval of the Board of Management prior to the admission of students to the school.
- b. The Board of Management may set a maximum limit on the number of places available in the school in any given year. The Board will set such limits based on the availability of resources, facilities and staff. Any limits being set shall be decided by the Board in the September of the preceding year.
- c. In order to be validly enrolled as a student of the school, the student, accompanied by her parents/guardians must
  - In accordance with Section 23(4) of the Education Welfare Act, sign that they have read and understood the school behaviour code as issued to them and that said code is acceptable to them and that they

shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by the student.

- Sign that they understand that the school is a Catholic Voluntary School which subscribes to the Mercy ethos of education and that they are willing to accept the right of the school to uphold its ethos through the display of emblems and by other means.
- Wear the school uniform, without modification, as prescribed.

d. In the event of St Mary's having more applications than places available, the following criteria will apply, in order of 1 through 5.

Category 1: Sisters of present students and past pupils

Category 2: Daughters of Board of Management employees

Category 3: Children whose mothers are past pupils

Category 4: Students from feeder primary schools. The recognised feeder schools for St. Mary's Secondary School are (in alphabetical order): Annaleentha, Ballyclough, Baltydaniel, Burnfort, Bweeng, Convent Primary School, Dromahane, Gaelscoil Thomais Daibhis, Glantane, Killavullen, Mallow Community Primary School, Rahan and Scoil Gobnatan.

Category 5: Applicants from non-feeder schools (other than those who qualify under Criteria 1 – 4 above) will be offered places only once places have been offered to applicants from the feeder primary schools identified above. Random selection for remaining places will apply.

Note: If the maximum number of enrolments is reached at any one of the stated ordered criteria above, then the places available will be offered in that category on a random basis.

## **8 Special Educational Needs**

- a. The Board of Management welcomes students with special educational needs.
- b. To ascertain the ability of the school to cater for the needs of such a student, the school requires to be furnished with the student's records and individual educational programme from the Primary School well in advance of her entry into St Mary's. The school will require parental permission for this.
- c. St Mary's may also require parental / guardian permission for access to any relevant medical or psychological reports.
- d. In the absence of such reports, the school will require parental / guardian permission to request a National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) assessment or similar psychological assessment. The purpose of this assessment will be to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the applicant.
- e. The school, in co-operation with NEPS or other relevant authority, will inform the NCSE of whatever resources, equipment or personnel will be required to cater for any special needs of the Applicant. Subject to the provision and availability of the necessary resources, the Principal and / or relevant teacher will, as soon as possible, arrange to meet with the parents / guardians of the student to discuss the students' needs and the schools capacity to meet those needs.
- f. The school recognises the need for liaison and co-operation between St Mary's and the teachers in the Primary Schools as well as with parents / guardians of students with special needs, and will, subject to the availability of adequate resources endeavour to facilitate the process of transition of such students from primary to post primary education.
- g. Final confirmation of a place in St Mary's may have to be withheld until confirmation from the DES of necessary resources is received.

## **9 Mid-Year Entry or Transfer**

An application for transfer is defined as one from a student who is currently enrolled in another school. St Mary's may enroll a student in the school during the school year subject to the following conditions:

- a. The school will require to be furnished with a fully completed Transfer Request Form, available from Reception upon request (See Appendix 2), regarding the applicant's

record in such areas as attendance, disabilities, special needs, conduct and any other matters relating to the students educational progress and deportment as the school management may consider appropriate.

- b. The school reserves the right to refuse a request for transfer during the school year where the school believes such a move would not be in the best interest of the student.
- c. The school will take due account of the availability of space in the school, the suitability of the subjects taught and the levels at which they are taught, and the subject options available to the student.
- d. The school will take due account of the suitability of the student for the school.
- e. The school does not guarantee a place in any subject or course to a student who wishes to transfer.
- f. The school will take account of the reference from the current / previous Principal and reserves the right to consult with the school from which the student is transferring in order to request a confidential reference, thereby to assess the application.
- g. The application shall be considered on the basis of the references received. Where it is established that a student's behaviour is unacceptable in their previous school, the Principal may decide not to accept such a student in the Health & Safety and Educational best interests of the school community.
- h. The school may consult the Education Welfare Officer concerning any applicant.
- i. A decision on the application will be made in accordance with this policy and will be communicated to the parent/guardian within 21 days of the school's receipt of the fully completed Transfer Request Form.

## **10 Right of the Board to Refuse Admission**

While recognising the right of parents to enroll their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School must also respect the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the students already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. The Board of Management of St Mary's reserves the right to refuse an application for admission to the school if, in the opinion of the Board, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, the school staff, or to school property.

The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children to be enrolled in each year group per academic year, bearing in mind:

- Available space in classrooms and Health & Safety requirements
- Availability of teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- Maximum class size directives

## **11 Right of Appeal**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents / guardians of students or students over the age of 18 years, who have been refused admission to the school, have the right to appeal such a refusal by the Board of Management to the Secretary General of the Department of Education. Appeals must be lodged within 42 days of having been informed by the school of such refusal.

## **12 Application to Repeat a Year**

Parents/Guardians who wish for their daughter to repeat a year must apply in writing to the Principal of the school before the 1<sup>st</sup> of May in the current academic year. The school has the right to refuse or grant such a request, in line with Department of Education guidelines.

## **13 Application to Repeat the Leaving Certificate**

The school will consider requests from past pupils only to repeat the Leaving Certificate. Applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- a. Capacity of the school to take repeat candidates.
- b. Capacity of the school to provide students with requested options.
- c. Previous compliance with the school's behaviour code, attendance record, and general work rate and effort in class.
- d. Applicant's commitment, made via a contract with the school, to attend all timetabled classes throughout the school day and to fully comply with the Code of Behaviour at all times. Breach of this contract will result in termination of the repeat arrangements.

## **14 Application for Transition Year**

- a. Transition Year is not a compulsory part of the curriculum in St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow. Students may wish to avail of the course as one of the Senior Cycle Options, alternatively students can choose to progress directly into 5<sup>th</sup> Year or Leaving Certificate Applied.
- b. Students can apply for admission into Transition Year following the Transition Year Information Evening scheduled in March for parents of current 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students. Applications are accepted up to the specified deadline stated for that year. Applications received after that date may not be considered.
- c. The Board of Management may set a maximum limit on the number of places available on the Transition Year Programme in any given year. The Board will set such limits based on the availability of resources, facilities and staff.
- d. Acceptance into Transition Year will be based on the student's capacity to engage with the course as demonstrated in particular during the previous school year. The following criteria will be considered; good behaviour, positive attitude, attendance, work ethic and commitment to participating in the Transition Year programme. The school reserves the right to interview prospective transition year students to assess their suitability for the programme.
- e. Continuation of students in Transition Year is conditional on their continued good behaviour, positive attitude, attendance, work ethic and participation in the course during the year. Students may be moved from Transition Year into 5<sup>th</sup> Year if it is deemed necessary by the Principal.

## **15 Enrolment of Foreign Exchange Students**

- a. Enrolment applications from foreign exchange students, or the companies representing them, will be considered on the basis of the school's capacity to provide adequately for such pupils.
- b. The school shall take into account such matters as class size, staffing, school resources, and the age and needs of the pupil when considering any application.
- c. Foreign exchange students who wish to apply for enrolment in St Mary's must first complete the school's enrolment form in full. This document must be submitted to the school office by the 21<sup>st</sup> of June of each year. Applications submitted after this date will not be considered.
- d. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- e. Following the school's verification of the enrolment details provided, and a satisfactory information meeting with the exchange agency involved, a letter of offer shall be issued to the foreign exchange student via their agency.
- f. An appointment with the Principal shall be then be scheduled for a date in August, not earlier than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Pupils may attend this meeting accompanied by a representative of their agency or a member of their host family.
- g. Students will be assigned subject options by the Principal/Deputy Principal of the school based upon availability of space within subject classes already established. Requests for subject change will not be facilitated.
- h. Students will follow their assigned timetable without deviation and attend all scheduled classes. Timetables will not be changed.
- i. Students to note that access to school resources is based upon availability.
- j. Failure to attend the scheduled meeting with the Principal will result in the school's offer of a place being withdrawn.
- k. All school voluntary contributions should be paid to the school office in advance of the student taking up a place in St Mary's.
- l. Should an exchange student fail to comply with the school's code of conduct, the school reserves the right to revoke that pupil's place in St Mary's and will refer the matter to the relevant exchange agency.

## 16 Review & Ratification

- a. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School on 29-8-2017.
- b. This policy may be reviewed as deemed necessary by the Board.

Signature of Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_