



Sancta Maria College Admissions Policy

This policy is reviewed periodically by the Board of Management and is subject to change.

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 Sancta Maria College has consulted with school staff, students, the school patron, students and with parents of students attending the school.

The policy was approved by CEIST (the school patron) on 19th August 2020. The Board of Management hopes that this policy will assist parents/guardians and students in their choice of school and with any issues regarding admissions and enrolment. The chairperson of the Board of Management and the principal, acting on behalf of the Board of Management in the administration of the admissions policy, will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from this policy. This policy is available on the school website www.sanctamariacollege.com and on request from the school office.

The relevant dates and timelines for admission process are set out in Sancta Maria College's annual admission notice which is published annually on our 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.

Characteristic spirit and general objectives of Sancta Maria College

Sancta Maria College is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust).

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management of Sancta Maria College 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.

“Catholic Ethos” in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church which aims to promote:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person, 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

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.

Catholic education is therefore a lifelong process of human growth and development which has been at the heart of the Church’s mission since Jesus Christ urged his disciples to ‘go teach all nations’. The person of Christ is the core of Catholic education.

Sancta Maria College draws on the richness of the religious and cultural heritage of the past, interpreted and lived out for students living in today’s world. The charism of founder Catherine McAuley of the Mercy Order who began this school is of very significant importance in the life of the school.

As a CEIST school, Sancta Maria College values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities. Our school seeks to build a quality learning community that welcomes, and bears witness to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the CEIST Charter. These are encapsulated in the core values which are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our schools.

- *Promoting Spiritual and Human Development*
- *Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning*
- *Showing Respect for Every Person*
- *Creating Community*
- *Being Just and Responsible*

Sancta Maria College is inspired by the words of Jesus Christ to his disciples, “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full” (Jn 10:10). Because of this, Sancta Maria College provides a rich, holistic education in the Catholic tradition where engagement with and development of the whole person; the intellectual, moral, religious, physical, spiritual and psychological are at the core of our practice.

Education has as its goal the formation of a human person who is free, rational and mature in relationships. Sancta Maria College offers educational opportunities which promote excellence so that students can respond responsibly and creatively to their own lives, the lives of others and to the earth, which is our common home.

In Sancta Maria College the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God is acknowledged and affirmed. The Catholic school is an inclusive community, ideally built on love and

formed by the interaction and collaboration of its various components: students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the Board of Management. Catholic schools are also outward looking. They are connected to their local parish and Diocese and other local organisations which enrich the life of the school. Our school draws on the rich resources of the local community and, in turn, contributes to the life of the local community.

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is central to our curriculum. Alongside Religious Education, the school supports the formation in faith of our students through many school-based experiences of prayer and ritual. All students' spiritual growth is further enhanced through such areas as sport, language, nature, art, poetry and music.

The Mission Statement of Sancta Maria College underpins our practice –

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Sancta Maria College is committed to the holistic development of each student. As a Catholic school, we pursue excellence in an inclusive, caring and respectful environment.

Admission Statement

Sancta Maria College 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.

Sancta Maria College is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

Sancta Maria College is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of the Catholic faith in preference to others.

Sancta Maria College is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a

person who is not of the Sancta Maria Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed
- 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
- c) Sancta Maria College 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
- d) Sancta Maria College 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.

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:

- Students who currently have a sister in the school
- Students attending the traditional feeder school of Scoil Naomh Padraig, Ballyroan
- Students who have had a sister in the school in the past
- Daughters of members of current staff
- Students who are daughters of past students
- All other applicants

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:

- A lottery system will be employed with independent oversight of same

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, including naíonraí,

- (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, 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 member of her family attending or having previously attended the school; except as part of our selection criteria above:
- (g) 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 Sancta Maria College will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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

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 21 days of the closure of the period for application. (The timeline will be 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 below for further details).

Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

Parents/Guardians will be asked to confirm acceptance of an offer of a place in writing, not later than 14 days after receipt of the offer being made. In accepting an offer of admission from Sancta Maria College, Parents/Guardians must indicate—

(i) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) whether or not they have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, they 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 Sancta Maria College 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 above.
- (v) 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 Sancta Maria 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 Sancta Maria College 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:

The Board of Management will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking to transfer to Sancta Maria College. It will consider requests for school places into other year groups, subject to their conformity with the criteria as per enrolment of 1st year students and to the availability of school places at the time of application. Requests to transfer from another school will be dealt with on a case by case basis and will be subject to the availability of space and/or resources in the requested programme.

As with applicants for first year, an official application form needs to be completed. The following information is required from Parents/ Guardians prior to enrolment:

- Student's name; age; date of birth; PPSN; current address and birth certificate
- Parent's/ Guardians names, addresses, contact telephone numbers (home, mobile and emergency)
- Details of relevant medical conditions
- Details of disabilities or any special educational needs of the student
- Religious denomination
- Previous schools attended by the student
- Relevant information, if applicable, regarding student custody, access arrangements and court orders pertaining to the student.

The following criteria will also apply:

- (i) Space in a particular year. In case of a student wishing to enrol in the College at the commencement of an academic year, the Board of Management will have to establish the number of places in the given year and/or Programme having ensured that all existing students of the school can be catered for within each year group.
- (ii) In the event of oversubscription, the criteria applied will be the same as those that are applied in the case of oversubscription of 1st years. Parents will be informed of the school's expectations regarding attendance and registration. Parents will also be informed of the date by which the student is expected to attend to school to secure her place. Should the student not attend by this time, and an acceptable reason has not been provided by her parents, the school will no longer hold the place which may then be allocated to another applicant.
- (iii) 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.

Additional Programmes for Senior Cycle:

In addition to the traditional Leaving Certificate programme, the School offers Transition Year and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme as optional programmes at senior cycle. Please see appendix 1.

Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The board of Sancta Maria College 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.

Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend Sancta Maria College without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how that request may be accommodated by the school.

Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

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. This request should be in writing and must be made within 28 days of the receipt of the letter indicating refusal of admission and 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.

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. The appeals application form can be downloaded from the DES website www.education.ie or obtained from the school office.

Approved by CEIST on 19th August 2020

Appendix 1

General Admission Criteria

- The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the numbers entering each programme on an annual basis.
- In each case, it is important that enrolment of the applicant to a specific course in the opinion of the school is considered beneficial to that student's continuing education.
- In the event that there are more applicants than places, names will be placed on a waiting list.
- Costs associated with the delivery of each programme is agreed by the BOM on an annual basis. These costs facilitate the wide range of activities in which students are involved during the year. Provision of activities and subjects depends on resources and availability and this is also reviewed annually.

Specific Admission Criteria for Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme:

Transition Year (TY)

Transition Year is a one-year programme. It provides a bridge to enable students make the transition from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle. In Sancta Maria College the Transition Year Programme is primarily designed to

- Foster academic achievement as students prepare for a Leaving Certificate Programme.
- Promote independent learning at all levels, self-motivation and maturity.
- Encourage personal and social development.
- Promote the need for students to grow in independence and a wide range of transferable critical thinking and creative skills.

Provision of the Transition Year Programme in Sancta Maria College

- In accordance with the school's ethos and the needs of the total student population, the Board of Management hopes to make the Transition Year Programme available on an annual basis.
- The provision of the Transition Year Programme on an annual basis is dependent on the school's resources and on feasibility.

Application for admission to Transition Year Programme

- Sancta Maria College will organise an Information Session, as part of Senior Cycle Night in order that parent(s)/legal guardian(s) may inform themselves about the Transition Year Programme. Applicants for Transition Year Programme are expected to attend this Information Session, accompanied by their parent(s)/legal guardian(s).
- The closing date for receipt of application forms will be specified on the application form.
- Applicants should complete and sign the application form and Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) should counter sign it.
- Completed application forms will be marked with the date of receipt.
- Admission will be on the basis of completed application form and formal interview process.
- Application and interview will result in the ranking of applicants; criteria for ranking will be communicated to students and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) at the Information Session

on Senior Cycle Night and will be in line with the Department of Education and Skills programme description outlined in *Transition Year Programmes* and referenced above.

Decision making process for admission to Transition Year Programme

- The Board may delegate the management of the process to the Principal who decides on such matters in accordance with the *School Admissions Policy*.
- A decision regarding application to Transition Year Programme will be communicated in writing to parent(s)/legal guardian(s) within 21 school days.
- Late applications for admission to Transition Year Programme shall only be considered where the number of places available in a given school year has not been filled.
- The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse admission into Transition Year and to insist that students proceed directly to 5th Year.

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (L.C.V.P)

Only students with the DES designated Vocational Subject Groupings can be considered for this course.

Approved by CEIST on 19th August 2020