

St Mary's Secondary School Admissions Policy

1. Mission Statement

St Mary's Secondary School is a Catholic Voluntary School, catering for girls only, under the Trusteeship of Ceist. The school aims to provide a welcoming, holistic education in the Catholic tradition for all our students. The school is committed to the academic, creative, emotional and physical development of each student in a caring and safe environment.

2. Operating Context

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 supports and subscribes to the underlying principles of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

3. Organisation, Programmes, Curriculum & Activities

- a. The school is grant-aided by the Department of Education.
- b. The school is managed by the Board of Management, which is composed of four Trustee nominees, two Staff nominees, and two Parent nominees.
- c. 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.
- d. A Parent's Association and Student Council operate within the school in co-operation with the Board of Management.
- e. The daily teaching hours of the school are from 9.15am to 3.50pm Monday to Friday. Reception is open during these hours and can be reached at 063-81877 or admin@stmaryscharleville.org. The school website address is www.stmaryscharleville.ie.
- f. Supervision of students outside of class time is composed of 9.05-9.15am, 10.35-10.45am, 12.35-13.20pm, and 3.50-4.00pm, except in the case of a school-sponsored activity or event. All students are expected to observe safety regulations and guidelines at all times.
- g. The school requests an annual parental contribution per pupil to assist in meeting costs. The school may supplement its operating income by means of fund-raising activities.
- h. The school's Prospectus sets out in detail the programmes, subjects, pastoral and other services, including extra-curricular activities, available in the school.

4. Students Who Are Eligible For Admission into 1st Year

The School aims to provide an integrated and inclusive education. Students who are eligible for admission shall:

- a. Have reached the age of 11 on the 1st of January in the calendar year preceding their entry to First Year.
- b. Have completed 6th class in Primary School or its equivalent.
- c. Be willing, in conjunction with their parents, to accept and participate in the school ethos.
- d. Be willing, in conjunction with their parents, to accept and participate fully in the curriculum provided.

- e. Be willing, in conjunction with their parents, to accept the school Code of Behaviour.

5. Application Procedures for Prospective 1st Year Pupils

- a. Application Forms for enrolment will be available from the school office (See Appendix 1).
- b. An Open Information Night for parents and prospective students is held annually by the school and is advertised. (Normally held mid Oct of the year before starting school). During this event Application Forms are available.
- 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 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.
- e. Fees for book rental, the school journal and lockers must also be returned with the Application Form.
- f. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered unless places remain unfilled following the offer of places to valid applicants.
- g. Prospective students will sit an Entrance Assessment.
- h. The school may request a meeting with a student and her parents / guardians as part of the enrolment process.
- i. All student enrolments are subject to the approval of the Board of Management.
- j. The school may seek other relevant information about a prospective student.
- k. 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, policies for the time being and disciplinary code of the school.
- l. Decisions on enrolment will be made by the Board of Management of the school through the Principal, to whom it delegates this task.
- m. The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application for admission.

6. 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.

7. 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 students 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. Final confirmation of a place in St Mary's may have to be withheld until confirmation from the DES of necessary resources is received.
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8. 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 enrol 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.

9. Right of the Board to Refuse

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 pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, the school staff, or to school property.

10. Right of Appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Welfare 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.

11. 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 1st 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.

12. 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.

13. Application for Transition Year

- a. Transition Year is not a compulsory part of the curriculum in St Mary's Secondary School. Students may wish to avail of the course as one of the Senior Cycle options and can apply for the course in February/March time of 3rd year when an Information Evening is held for parents. Applications are accepted up to the deadline stated for that year. Applications received after that date may not be considered.

- b. 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. Issues such as attendance, punctuality, and previous conduct will be taken into account.
- c. Letters of Offer will be issued to successful applicants after the application process is complete.
- d. Places are secured by returning the letter, complete with signed Transition Year Contract and on receipt of the specified instalment of the course fee.
- e. The assignment of a student to Transition Year is considered final once the offer of a place has been accepted by the student and her parent/guardian.
- f. Continuation of students in Transition Year is conditional on their continued good behaviour, attendance and participation in the course during the year. Students may be moved from Transition Year into 5th Year if it is deemed necessary by the Principal.

14. 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. The school shall only consider enrolment of foreign exchange students into the year groups 2nd and 5th.
- d. The school shall only consider enrolment of foreign exchange students who wish to stay a minimum of 6 months.
- e. 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 21st of June of each year. Applications submitted after this date will not be considered.
- f. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- g. 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.
- h. An appointment with the Principal shall be then be scheduled for a date in August, not earlier than the 10th of the month. Pupils may attend this meeting accompanied by a representative of their agency or a member of their host family.
- i. 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.
- j. Students will follow their assigned timetable without deviation and attend all scheduled classes. Timetables will not be changed.
- k. Students to note that access to school resources is based upon availability.
- l. Failure to attend the scheduled meeting with the Principal will result in the school's offer of a place being withdrawn.
- m. All school fees must be paid in advance of the pupil taking up a place in St Mary's.
- n. 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.

15. Review & Ratification

- a. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of the school on _____.
- b. This policy may be reviewed as deemed necessary by the Board.

Signature of Chair _____ Date _____

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____