



## **Admission Policy of Sancta Maria College**

**Louisburgh  
Co. Mayo**

**Roll number: 64660F**

**School Patron: CEIST CLG**

### **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 approved by the school patron on March 6th 2023. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

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

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

## **2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

Sancta Maria College is a coeducational voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust) whose core values are inclusive of the Mercy philosophy of education.

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;
  - (b) a living relationship with God and with other people;
  - (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus;
  - (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 Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Religious Order, Sisters of Mercy, 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

### **3. 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 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 Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Sancta Maria College is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

### **Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

Sancta Maria College with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has an established class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Sancta Maria College will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

Sancta Maria College will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b)

## **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

Sancta Maria College is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

**The special class attached to Sancta Maria College provides an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.**

## **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.

### 1. Siblings

The Board of Management wishes to support the family ethos in education. Accordingly, first priority for entry into First Year is given to siblings of current students of the school, prior to the operation of the random selection process. Siblings are assigned to Criteria 1.

### 2. Students attending Primary School in Louisburgh, Killeen, Lecanvey or Clare Island or residing in an area where Sancta Maria College is the nearest Secondary Level School. These students are assigned to Criteria 2.

Following the allocation of places to applicants who fall under Criteria 1 and Criteria 2 each remaining application will then be assigned to one of the following criteria:

Criteria 3-5 have equal priority

3. Students attending schools 5-17 on the feeder school list. (Criteria 3)
4. Applicants who are the children of staff currently employed by Sancta Maria College (Criteria 4)
5. Applicants whose parent(s)/guardian(s) or grandparents attended Sancta Maria College in the past **subject to a 25% limit. (Criteria 5)**
6. All other applicants: Other students whose parents/guardians wish them to attend Sancta Maria College will be assigned to **Criteria 6.**

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:

First priority for entry into First Year will be given to siblings of current students of the school, prior to the operation of a random selection process.

The second priority for entry into First Year will be students attending schools 1-5 on our feeder school list prior to the operation of a random selection process.

A random Selection Process will then be operated.

The number of places to be offered to students in criteria 3-5 will be on a percentage pro-rata basis directly proportional to the number of applications received from each of the Criteria 3-5 (for example, if 30% of the total number of applications are in a particular school, then 30% of the available places will be allocated to that school).

- The random process to select those students from each criteria to whom an offer of a place will be made will be overseen by the Chairperson of the Board of Management (or a nominee of the Chair) and witnessed by an Independent Observer.
- There will be 14 containers, one for each of the feeder schools in Criteria 3, one for criteria 4 and one for criteria 5. The name of each applicant will be placed in the appropriate container. A member of the Board of Management will draw names from each container, one by one, until the maximum number of places allotted to each criteria is reached. The order in which the names are drawn from the container will be recorded on a numbered list. Places will be allocated in that order until the available places are filled.
- The remaining names in the fourteen containers will then be placed in a single container and a second similar random process will take place to establish a waiting list.
- Where there are application forms from two or more siblings in the random selection process, then upon selection of one of the siblings, all of the siblings' names will be deemed selected. Where there are insufficient places left in the relevant criteria, the name of a remaining sibling will be automatically placed at the beginning of the waiting list.
- In the event that there are places available when all applicants in criteria 3-5 have been accommodated, places will be allocated to applicants in criteria 6. Where the number of such applicants exceeds the number of remaining places, a random selection process will be operated, as above.
- If there are any unfilled places when all applications received on time have been dealt with, late applications will be considered. Available places will be allocated to late applications in order of the date of their receipt. If necessary, a random selection process will be used.

## **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, including naíonraí,
- B. the payment of fees or contribution (howsoever described) to the school;
- C. a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;(other than in relation to admission to a special class in so far as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned).
- D. the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- E. a requirement that a student, or his 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 member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school. In relation to (2) this criteria may only apply to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).
- 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.

## 8. 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 (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 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 **section 18** below for further details).

## **10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

**In accepting an offer of admission from Sancta Maria College you must indicate—**

**(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.**

**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.**

## **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 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 **section 10** above.

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.

## 12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the **Education Act 1998** 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).

### **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 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.

### **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 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.

### **15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

#### **Procedures for admission of students to a year group other than First Year and/or to any year group during the school year**

Where parents wish to make an application for their son/daughter to a year group other than First Year or during the school year, they should in the first instance fill in an Application Form. An offer of a place can only be made if there is space in the year group in question. A decision on whether a place can be offered will be conveyed to the parents within 21 days of the initial application. Applications made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year will be deferred until the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend, in turn, on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year group. Such applications will be placed on a waiting list until the number of available

places in the relevant year group has been established by the Principal.

Before accepting the offer of a place in the school the parents and their son/daughter may be invited to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ascertain whether there is a place available in the particular subject classes required by their son/daughter. The fact that there may be a space in a year group would not automatically mean that there is a place available in a particular subject class at the level required by the student. This is because class size is limited in certain subjects. For this reason parents and their son/daughter are strongly recommended to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ensure that a transfer to the school would be in the best interests of their son/daughter given the curricular provision, subject choices/levels available at the time.

**Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant to a year group other than First Year or during the school year:**

The parents must confirm their acceptance in writing of an offer of a place within three weeks of the date of the offer of a place.

In accepting an offer of admission from Sancta Maria College the parents 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.

Parents 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 of a place in a year group other than First Year or during the school year 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 within three weeks of the date of the offer of a place;
- (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;
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an

offer' as set out above;

(v) 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. 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; or

(vi) the application is made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year before the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year.

### **Oversubscription to the year group other than First Year:**

In the event of there being more applications to the year group other than First Year than places available, a waiting list of students, whose application for admission to the particular year group has been refused, will be compiled and will remain valid only for the school year in which admission is being sought. Should a parent wish to apply for a place for the following academic year a new application must be made from May 1st.

Placement on the waiting list will be in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy see Section 6 above. If there are two or more students in any of the selection criteria categories set out in Section 6 above, then the position on the waiting list (for places in a year group other than First year) will be determined by a lottery process overseen by the Principal, Deputy Principal and an independent observer appointed by the Board of Management.

Offers of any subsequent places in the year group other than First Year that become available during the school year 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.

### **Sharing of Data with other schools:**

Applicants should note that the provisions of Section 12 above relating to the sharing of data with other schools will apply in all cases where an application is made to a year group other than First Year or during the school year.

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).

## **16. 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.

## **17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

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 of the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

## **18. 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. 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, 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.

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.

Signed: Dominic Feeney (Chairperson)

6 March 2023

Aine Moran (Principal)

## **Appendix One**

### School Ethos

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.

### **Mission Statement**

At Sancta Maria College, we welcome, care for and support all within the school community through the promotion of:

- Respect
- Being just and responsible
- Quality teaching and learning
- An inclusive community
- Long-life learning

## Appendix 2

### Feeder Primary Schools

#### Category 2 Feeder Schools

- Clare Island N S
- Killeen N S
- Lecanvey N S
- Louisburgh NS

#### Category 3 Feeder Schools

- Brackloon N S
- Carrowholly N S
- Carrowkennedy N S
- Cogaula NS
- Cuilmore N S
- Drummin N S
- Fahy N S
- Gaelscoil Westport
- Glenhest NS
- Holy Family NS, Newport
- Holy Trinity Westport
- Inis Turk N S
- Knockrooskey N S
- Lankhill N S
- Leenane N S
- Louisburgh NS
- Murrisk N S
- Myna N S
- Quay N S Westport
- Scoil Phadraig Westport