

St. Gerard's Senior School

Admission Policy

October 2020



School Address: Thornhill Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Roll number: 61811i

School Patron: Board of Directors

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 Directors 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 Board of Directors on 27th October 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Annual Admissions Notice for the school year concerned.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Gerard's School 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.

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

St. Gerard's School is a Catholic co-educational fee-charging voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Board of Directors.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person and of the student; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and 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 students in the Catholic faith.

The school's "Catholic Ethos Document" states clearly the school's aims and objectives in this regard.

In accordance with S.15 (2)(b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Directors of St. Gerard's School shall uphold, and be accountable for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as outlined in our Mission Statement.

St. Gerard's School Mission Statement

Our vision for St. Gerard's School can be summarised as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for each student to realise his or her potential in all areas: academic, moral, personal, physical, social, spiritual and sporting.
- To promote and sustain a happy, secure and efficient environment in which positive relationships are highly valued, and development and growth take place with the co-operation of all members of the school community.
- To instil a sense of mutual respect and care for all members of the school community.
- To foster honesty, integrity, self-discipline, respect, concern for others, self-esteem, inclusiveness, social awareness and charity.
- To nurture an appreciation of our cultural heritage.

In short, to develop educated, thinking and caring individuals.

3. Admission Statement

St. Gerard's School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

St. Gerard's School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes Roman Catholic values. St. Gerard's School does not discriminate where it admits a student of the Roman Catholic faith in preference to others.

Furthermore, St. Gerard's School does not discriminate where it refuses to admit, as a student, a person who is not of the Catholic religion and it is considered that the refusal is essential to maintain the Catholic Ethos of the school.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed;
(Please see [section 5](#) below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, when required by the Headmaster 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) St. Gerard's School is a Catholic School and may refuse to admit, as a student, a person who is not of the Catholic religion where it is deemed that the refusal is essential to maintain the Catholic Ethos of the school.

5. 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, until the full commencement of the 2018 Act:

- Category 1 Children who have completed Sixth Class in St. Gerard's Junior School on the recommendation of the Junior School Principal and with the agreement of the Headmaster.
- Category 2 Sibling of a student attending St. Gerard's School
- Category 3 Son/daughter of a full-time member of staff of St. Gerard's School who have been employed by the Board of Directors for two years or more.
- Category 4 Parent or Grandparent having attended the school for a minimum four years to include Sixth Year (to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces, as set out in the School's Annual Admissions Notice)
- Category 5 External candidates

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (i.e. the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangement will apply:

- a) Applicants who do not secure a place in the process up to and including 2025 will be Wait Listed, and advised of their place on the Waiting List in order of the date of receipt of application. They will be invited to confirm their desire to remain on the Waiting List from which any places subsequently arising will be allocated in the order of priority of which applicants are placed on the Waiting List based on the above criteria. In the event of a tie when creating the Waiting List, places will be determined by the drawing of lots under independent supervision.
- b) After 2025, the successful candidate will be determined by the drawing of lots under independent supervision.
- c) Any Waiting List will commence after the opening of the school at the start of the new academic year and will remain active for the remainder of First Year. Those remaining on the waiting list may apply for inclusion on a List which will operate for second and latter years.

6. 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) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (e) 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).

7. Decisions on applications and acceptance of a place

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Gerard's School 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

(Please see [Section 13](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [Section 14](#) 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.

8. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the Annual Admission Notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the Waiting List for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see Section 17 below for further details).

9. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Gerard's School, an applicant must indicate—

- (a) 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
- (b) 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 St. Gerard's School. Applicants should return all required documentation fully completed within the timeframe specified in the Letter of Offer.

10. 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 St. Gerard's School where—

- (a) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (b) 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.
- (c) the parent of a student, when required by the Headmaster 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
- (d) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in Section 9 above.

The Board of Directors 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 Directors 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 of Directors 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, or top the Catholic Ethos of the school.

11. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students. Section 66 (6) allows a school to provide a patron or another Board of Management with a list of students in relation to whom –

- (a) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (b) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (c) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (a) the date on which an application was received by the school;
- (b) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (c) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (d) 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).

12. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to St. Gerard's School in the school year concerned than places available, a Waiting List of students whose applications for admission to St. Gerard's School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Gerard's School is in the order of priority category as 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 category in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

13. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the Annual Admission Notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's Admission Policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applications 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.

14. Procedures for admission of students to First Year, to other years, and during the school year

(a) Procedure for entry into First Year

- i. Parents must lodge a fully completed application form together with the stated application fee. The deadline is set out in the Annual Admissions Notice. Parents are requested to furnish the latest Primary School report with the application.
- ii. The school hosts an annual Open Morning which is notified in advance, for parents and pupils who are in fifth class in Primary School. The purpose of this morning is for prospective students and their families to experience the academic, religious, cultural and sports facilities of the school, to meet some of the students and teaching staff, and to meet other prospective students of their own age in a relaxed atmosphere. Attendance at the Open Morning, while not compulsory, is encouraged.
- iii. A list of the student applicants prepared in accordance with the order of admissions priorities set out in this policy is presented to the Board of Directors for approval.
- iv. Parents of successful applicants are notified by post that their son/daughter is offered a place in the school.
- v. On acceptance of an offer of a place, a non-refundable deposit is required to be paid to the school. This deposit is credited when the student is in Sixth Year as a reduction in the final year fee. The deposit is forfeited if the student is withdrawn from the school before Sixth Year.
- vi. On acceptance of any offer, any relevant educational or psychological report on the student relating to any special education needs or any medical condition or disability must be furnished to the school. This is important as the school must apply to the Department of Education and Skills for the resources to support such students.
- vii. The Headmaster may, if he sees fit, contact the Principal of the Primary School to establish the needs of the student. The Headmaster, or another member of the school community, may meet with the student and parents. Attendance at this meeting, while not compulsory, is encouraged.
- viii. Before the student commences in First Year, the parent of each student must sign an undertaking that their son/daughter will abide by the St. Gerard's School Code of Behaviour.

(b) Application for a year other than First Year

Applications made for places in other years (Second - Sixth Year) will be assessed on the availability of places in any given year. Where any year is oversubscribed, the criteria set out in this policy will be applied.

The application procedure is as follows:

- I. Parents must complete and submit an application form together with the stated application fee.
- II. Parents must submit their sons/daughters most recent school reports from his/her present school as well as any educational or psychological report(s) or any other reports which may be relevant to the application.
- III. The Headmaster (or another senior member of the school community) will meet with the student and parents. Attendance at this meeting, while not compulsory, is encouraged.

Parents will be invited to discuss their willingness to support the Mission Statement, Catholic Ethos and Code of Behaviour. The Headmaster will contact the student's former school(s) in order to gain a character reference and a disciplinary report.

- IV. Transition Year is compulsory in St. Gerard's School and application from students wishing to transfer into Fifth Year from Junior Cycle will not, save in exceptional circumstances, be considered.
- V. The Headmaster will make a recommendation which may offer place to an applicant who has satisfied the entry criteria provided, provided
 - i. There is a vacant place for the student in the relevant year
 - ii. That the student and his/her parents subscribe to the Mission Statement, Catholic Ethos and Code of Behaviour of the school.
 - iii. That the student's behaviour and participation in his/her previous school demonstrates that he/she is compatible with the Mission Statement and Catholic Ethos of St. Gerard's School.
 - iv. Should the application be successful, parents of the student transferring from another school will be required to pay the appropriate deposit prior to admission to the school. This deposit will be refunded when the student is in Sixth year through a reduction of fees in Sixth year. The deposit is forfeited if the student is withdrawn from the school before Sixth year.
 - v. Prior to commencement in the school, the parent and student must sign an undertaking that the student will abide by the St. Gerard's School Code of Behaviour.

15. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of eighteen, who wishes to attend St. Gerard's School without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the Headmaster. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) of the student, or with the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

16. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Directors

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of eighteen years, the student, may request the Board of Directors to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29 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 29 of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board of Directors 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 Directors 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 Directors 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 eighteen 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 Directors **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 Directors prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

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 29 of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

17. Notice Period

A full term's notice is required in writing prior to the removal of a student from St. Gerard's Senior School or the next term's fees will be charged.

Approved by: Mr John Behan, Chairperson of the Board of Directors

Date: 27th October 2020

Mr John Behan
Chairperson of the Board of Directors