



OUR LADY OF MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL

Admission Policy and Enrolment Procedures

2017-2018

OUR LADY OF MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY & ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

This Admissions Policy is in line with The Education Act 1998, The Education Welfare Act 2000, The Equal Status Act 2000 and The Safety, Health & Welfare Act 1989. The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for the Policy and the Principal is responsible for its implementation. The policy is a written document and will be available on staff server, school website and on request. It is also subject to the rules and regulations of the DES, the legal rights of the trustees, the school mission statement and available resources; i.e., physical, personnel and financial.

The school is funded by direct grants and teacher salaries provided by DES. Additional funding is provided by an administration charge from parents and by fundraising. What the school can provide in any given situation will have regard to the resources and funding available.

In this policy, the following terms have the following meaning:

- **parent** refers to parent/parents or legal guardian/guardians
- **staff** refers to teachers, SNAs, examiners, supervisors, secretarial staff, support staff, caretaker, maintenance staff and other adults as inferred by the context
- **OLM** – Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School
- **CEIST** – Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust; the trustee body for the voluntary secondary schools of the Sisters of Mercy and four other similar religious orders.
- **DES** – Department of Education & Skills.
- **NCSE** – National Council for Special Education

Where lists are given they are not intended to be exhaustive, instead they are indicative of the particular behaviour, sanction or item.

INTRODUCTION

We are a co-educational voluntary Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST. Our school community consists of parents, students, staff, management, and trustees, sharing a common vision of education, inspired by the vision of the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Ven. Catherine McAuley. It is the school's policy to provide an integrated and an inclusive education. We aim to offer a comprehensive curriculum to all students, promoting justice and fairness in the execution of our teaching and management.

SCHOOL STATEMENT

Our Lady of Mercy welcomes all students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education. We aim to cater for the full range of student abilities and are currently working to raise our academic outcomes year-on-year. We also welcome students with special needs, having regard to the facilities and resources available.

In recognition of parents as the primary educators of their children, we consult with parents around decision making and in policy making and we work at promoting a partnership between all the parties that constitute our school community. We endeavour to have an open approach to communication of information to parents of prospective students.

MISSION STATEMENT

All of the school community will work with care, to develop mature young adults, who will achieve their full potential, who will be ready to deal with the challenges of the modern world.

SCHOOL ETHOS

The Sisters of Mercy opened their first school in Drimnagh in 1944. A girls' secondary school was established in 1956 and this became co-educational in 1973. The educational philosophy of the school is the full human development of the student in a Christian context. We aim to offer a positive meaningful educational experience, which allows the student to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm.

CORE VALUES

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development

- *We believe knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ gives meaning and purpose to our lives.*

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning

- *We are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.*

Showing Respect for Every Person

- *We respect the unique and intrinsic value of each person.*

Creating Community

- *Our schools are faith communities of welcome and hospitality where Gospel values are lived and where there is special care for those most in need.*

Being Just and Responsible

- *We seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships.*

VISION- *Shaping a Brighter Future for Our Young People*

The school's vision reflects our educational philosophy which aims to develop mature, confident people, with high education standards, who will be prepared to cope with the challenges of the modern world. The school is committed to the holistic development and the achievement of the full potential of each student. We aim to fulfil our mission in partnership with parents, staff, students, trustees and the local community.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

In keeping with our school ethos, OLM strives to be an open and welcoming place. Admission will be governed by the criteria and procedures set out in this policy document, unless otherwise updated by the Board of Management. *Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder should refer to the ASD Admissions Policy and Procedures.*

Enrolment may be limited by the school's capacity and/or by the requirements of the curriculum and school organisation, as prescribed from time to time by the Board of Management or as determined by DES regulations and standards.

In all cases the Board must be confident that the school can meet the needs of an applicant before admission is granted. Educational and/or psychological assessments as well as reports/ information from previous schools will be required from parents.

Section 29 (1) of the Education Act 1998 provides a **right of appeal** within a specified time for parents/ guardians of any student whose enrolment is refused. An appeal should be made in the first instance to the Board of Management. If this is unsuccessful an appeal can be made to the Secretary General of DES.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

1. The key dates in the annual timetable are generally as follows.

- The Board decides the number of places, subjects, levels, etc. at the beginning of the previous school year.
- Notification of enrolment dates will be sent to the main feeder schools in late September/October of the preceding year. Any parent who has earlier requested notification will be written to at this time also.
- The application stage in October involves completion of the approved Application Form supplying all necessary information, including supplementary information if requested. The administration charge is requested at this stage, and practical subject options are also indicated.
- In cases of students having special educational needs, the school may need to check with NCSE or DES about additional resources etc.
- As soon as is practicable, and no later than 21 days after a parent has provided all requested information, the school will inform them in writing of the outcome of their application.
- Registration takes place in November.
- The Entrance Assessment Tests are normally held in December.

2. Applying for a place in any year:

- Applications must be made on the approved **Application Form** and all information requested must be supplied. Application forms are available from the school office.
- **Parents must be willing to provide** references, reports and assessments from previous schools and agree to our school seeking further information from such schools. We need to be fully briefed as to any and all special needs as early as possible, so that these can be assessed and planned for.
- On acceptance of a place, parents are requested to pay the Administration charge. This charge covers insurance, most photocopying, newsletters, and also goes toward the costs of enrichment programmes such as student awards, sports kits, coaching, and bus hire.

3. Those applying for a place in 1st Year must in addition:

- Satisfy the DES requirements:
 - a) re minimum age, which is 12 years on or before 1st January following entry, and
 - b) have completed 6th class standard in primary school or equivalent, as a general rule.
- Satisfy our school's requirements re completion of the school's **Entrance Assessment Tests**, normally held in December.

4. Those applying for transfer from another 2nd level school:

- Are required to fully complete the school's special application form before any such application can be considered. This form is available from the office.

Late applications may be considered, subject to all conditions previously stated being met, and the availability of places.

5. Criteria for acceptance:

- All application procedures will have been complied with fully.
- The Board is satisfied that the school can meet the educational needs of the student.
- In the case of students having other special needs (mobility, medical, personal, etc.) the Board will need to be similarly satisfied that these can be met.
- Parents, as well as the students themselves, accept the School's Code of Behaviour and all other policies adopted by the Board of Management and undertake to accept and support the ethos of the school.
- In the case of students who are engaged with outside agencies for personal support, the parents and students will be required to inform the school, and also undertake to continue to engage with the outside agency.
- Each year parents and students will be required to renew these commitments as a condition of advancing to the next school year.
- In the case of applications for transfer from another 2nd level school, the Board will also need to be satisfied that:
 - a) The school will be able to meet the needs of the student, including subject choices and levels;
 - b) The transfer is being requested for sound reasons and is in the best interest of the student;
 - c) In the professional judgement of the Principal, the transfer will not be detrimental to the interests of existing students or the school community.

6. Applicant categories:

- Aiming as we do to serve mainly our own local community and neighbourhood, in the first instance places are reserved for Group A below. Applicants from Group A have preferential access, so long as places are available. If the number of applicants from Group A exceeds the number of places available, random selection will apply and the remainder will be placed on a Group A waiting list.
- **Group A:** At the time of enrolment attending the local primary schools, Our Lady of Good Counsel Boys or Girls.
- **Group B:** Students who at the time of application/enrolment display the ability to enhance our school community demonstrated by previous school record and are either:
 - a) permanently resident within Our Lady of Good Counsel Mourne Road parish or have close family so resident (grandparents etc) who will play an active role in their lunchtime and/or pre- or after-school care; or
 - b) siblings of either current- or past-students of our school; or
 - c) sons or daughters of past-students of our school.
- **Group-C:** All other applicants who have a school record suggesting capacity to enhance our school community, demonstrated by previous school record.

Group A takes precedence over Group B, and Group B takes precedence over Group C. If the number of applicants in Group B exceeds the number of places remaining available, random selection will apply and the remainder will be placed on a Group B waiting list. Similarly for Group C.

Without prejudice to any of the above, the Board reserves the right on the advice of the Principal to allocate a discretionary place into any year group at any time in response to special circumstances.

Signed: *Michael O'Sullivan*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 5th December 2017

Date of next review: October 2018

Signed: *Pádhraic Gibbons*

Principal

Date: 5th December 2017