



Admission Policy of Mercy Secondary School

Thomas Davis Street West, Inchicore, Dublin 8

Roll number: 60872A

CEIST

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 in May 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 Mercy Secondary 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.

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

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore is a Catholic co-educational 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 Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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.

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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 Mc Auley of Mercy Order who began this school is of very significant importance in the life of the school.

As a CEIST school, Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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, Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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. Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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 Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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.

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore is inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley and is a learning community that aims for excellence while nurturing a loving relationship with Christ through compassion for all within the trusteeship of CEIST, Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust .

3. Admission Statement

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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.

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment that promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of the Catholic faith in preference to others.

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment that promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic Faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Mercy Inchicore 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.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs to be catered for in the school/special class

Mercy Inchicore, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

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)

1. a) 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

All denominational schools

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore is a Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Catholic Faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special class attached to Mercy Inchicore provides an education exclusively for students with Autism/Autistic 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 notice:

Category 1.

Brothers and Sisters of current students or past students of Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore, Dublin 8.

Category 2

Sons and daughters of past pupils of Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore, Dublin 8.

Category 3

Students currently attending primary feeder schools in Dublin 8 and 12. Our Lady of Lourdes National School, Scoil Mhuire gan Smal, Inchicore National School, Our lady of the Wayside Bluebell, St Cillian's National School

Category 4

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:

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore, will apply a random selection process to assign any available places in the school, or on the waiting list, to those applications. Should a random selection process be required with categories where the number of applications exceeds the places available or to allocate remaining places within category 4, a random selection/lottery will take place:

The Chairperson of the BOM and an independent observer will be asked by the Board of Management to draw out names at random. The order in which names are drawn will be recorded. Applicants will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which names were OLMdrawn.

ENROLMENT CRITERIA FOR SPECIAL CLASSES INCORPORATING THE DES AND HSE POLICIES:

1. An Application Form provided by the school should be filled out by the parents on behalf of the student.
2. A recent psychological assessment or a report from a multi-disciplinary team must be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist. Please note all reports in operation on a student should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team.

3. The student must have a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-IV or ICD 10 by the psychologist or team.

4. There must be a recommendation by the medical professionals in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the student.

5. A guarantee of support by outside agencies such as HSE cannot be provided. Students who require speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc., will be dependent on the local HSE services.

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

- 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.
- 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 (where appropriate) are normally held in May.

7. Criteria for acceptance:

- All application procedures will have been complied with fully.
- The Admissions Team has considered the application. The team will include the School Principal, Deputy Principal and SEN Coordinator. A recommendation will be made in relation to each application to the Board of Management of the school. The Board has the right to endorse or overrule any decision made by the Admissions Team.
- 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.

- Once an application to the school for a place in the ASD class has been made the Principal will communicate the decision of the Admissions Team and Board of Management within two calendar months of the application.
- Parents will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the SEN Team and the Principal of the School.
- Parents must consent to a visit by the staff to the student's Primary School to conduct an observation.
- Students, once enrolled will be granted an opportunity to visit the ASD Class and meet

with the staff.

- After placement an IEP will be provided. This plan will have input from all parties involved and will be supported by a psychologist from NEPS. The SENO will also be made aware of the plan. The plan will be updated on a regular basis by staff.
- 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.
- It is accepted that students with SEN may display difficult, defiant or oppositional behaviours. All efforts will be made by the school to manage such behaviour using various strategies and through the implementation of the child's Individual Education Plan. Where a student's behaviour impacts in a negative way on other students in the class to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being compromised with, as judged by the Board, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be found for their child.
- 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 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:

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 Lourdes , Scoli Muire gan Smal, Our Lady of the Wayside, Inchicore National School.
- Group B: Students who at the time of application/enrolment are either: (a) permanently resident within Dublin 8 or (b) siblings of past-students of our school; or (c) sons or daughters of past-students of our school.
- Group-C: All other applicants.

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.

A place in the special class will only be available until the student's 18th year.

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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these (highlighted in red below) and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

(a) a student's prior attendance at a preschool 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 parent;

(e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or another meeting as a condition of admission;

(f) 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).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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 Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore you must indicate—

(i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission to another school or school. 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 are 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 maybe withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or maybe withdrawn by Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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 (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).

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 Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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 Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore 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

Mercy Secondary School is currently making the transition from an all-girls school to a co-educational school. The intake of male students is restricted to incoming first-years each academic year. Therefore the procedure related to admission of students into years groups other than first-year applies to female students only.

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 or after the commencement of the school year in which admission is are as follows:

Where parents wish to make an application for their child to a year group other than 1st year or to any year group after the commencement of 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.

Applications made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year will not be processed 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 in date order of receipt until the number of available places in the relevant year group has been established by the Principal. Places will then be allocated according to the waiting list.

Where applications have been received for admission of students to other years and during the school year, the Deputy Principal will arrange to meet the applicant and their parent/guardian(s). This meeting is in the best interest of the applicant to facilitate the transfer from one school to another. During that meeting the following items may be discussed:

1. If there is a place available in the requested year/programme
2. That the transfer is in agreement with school Admission Policy.

Circumstances in which offers of a place in a year group other than 1st Year or during the school year may not be made or maybe withdrawn:

An offer of admission may not be made or maybe withdrawn 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 two 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 1996 to provide or cause to be provided 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.

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.

16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The board of Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore or any persons acting on its behalf shall not, except in accordance with section 64 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, 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

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or 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, 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 to 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.

