



St. Paul's Secondary School

OUGHTERARD, CO. GALWAY H91 PT86

Tel: (091) 552689 Email: admin@stpaulsoughterard.ie

Admissions Policy

Admission Policy of St. Paul's Secondary School

School Address: Oughterard, Co. Galway

Roll number: 63101K

School Patron/s: 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 on the 8th December 2022. 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 St. Paul's Secondary School's 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 St. Paul's Secondary School

St. Paul's Secondary School 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 St. Paul's Secondary School 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.

St. Paul’s Secondary School 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 founder Catherine Mc Cauley of The Mercy Order who began this school is of very significant importance in the life of the school.

As a CEIST school, St. Paul’s Secondary School 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***

St. Paul’s Secondary School 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, St. Paul’s Secondary School 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. St. Paul's Secondary School 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 St. Paul's Secondary School 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

St. Paul's Secondary School, which was founded in 1964, is a Catholic Secondary School, which aims:

- To nurture the academic and personal development of each individual in a caring and safe environment within our school community
- To enhance the self-esteem of each individual in an atmosphere of mutual respect
- To strive as a Catholic school to apply the core values of the gospel through all aspects of school life
- To foster good relationships with parents, guardians and the wider school community.

Admission Statement

S. Paul's Secondary 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.

Post-primary denominational schools

St. Paul's Secondary School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of Catholic faith in preference to others.

All denominational schools

St. Paul's Secondary School 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Schools with special education class(es)

S. Paul's Secondary School is a school which has established an ASD class and a Moderate GLD 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 i.e. Autism or Mod. GLD.

Section 62 of the Education (Admissions to Schools Act)

St. Paul's Secondary School will co-operate with the national Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating 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.

St. Paul's Secondary School will comply with any direction served on the Patron or the Board, as the case may be, under Section 67 (4B) of the Education Act.

3. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

St. Paul's Secondary School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established (a) a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder ASD and (b) a class to provide education exclusively for students with Moderate GLD.

4. 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

All denominational schools

St. Paul's Secondary School is a Catholic School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

School with special education class(es)

Two special classes attached to St. Paul's Secondary School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism. The school may refuse admission to these classes, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

A third special class attached to St. Paul's Secondary School provided an education exclusively for students with Mod.GLD. 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.

5. Oversubscription (this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)

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:

First Year Enrolment Criteria:

The Board of Management has set a figure of 80 as the number of students to be accepted into First Year (2025/2026). In the event that the number of applications exceed the number of places available, places will be allocated according to the following order of priority:-

Enrolment Categories:**Category 1:**

Applicants who have/had a sibling in the school.

Category 2:

Applicants who live in the Oughterard/Killannin area and/or in the area supplied by our traditional feeder schools:

Scoil Cumín Agus Caitriona, Oughterard

St. Annin's National School, Rosscahill

Coillnamuc national School

Tullykyne National School

Scoil Náisiúnta Doirregloinne

Category 3:

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:

In the event that the school is over-subscribed in any of the above categories, the determining factor in allocating places and establishing a waiting list will be random selection. This random selection process will be independently witnessed.

Note: If more than one sibling from a family applies for admission into 1st Year, then in the event, that one sibling is offered a place, the other sibling/siblings will automatically be offered the next place(s).

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,
other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
(I) an early intervention class, or
(II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
other than in relation to:
 - *admission to the ASD class / Mod. GLD class insofar 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, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criterion based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school
- (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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

7. Decisions on applications

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

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 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).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Paul's Secondary School, 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 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. 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. Paul's Secondary School 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.

(v) *"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."

11. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admissions 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 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 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 the applicant
- (iv) a student's personal details including his/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 the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St. Paul's Secondary 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. Paul's Secondary School 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.

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 admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of their 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 other years and during the school year

(a) Procedures relating to admission to a year other than 1st Yr.

Application forms are available from the School Office on request. Applicants should complete the application form, giving all of the details required. Incomplete forms will be returned to parents/guardians.

Applicants will be required to furnish details about their prior second-level education, including copies of their two most recent school reports that set out the results of in-house examinations and a reference from their previous school. Where an applicant has attended more than one second-level school they may be required, at the discretion of the Board, to submit reports from each school and copies of the results of any State examinations.

Where it is considered necessary by the school, an applicant may be required to complete a further information form regarding their child's educational progress and/or to provide a current education psychological assessment report. Failure to complete any of the necessary documentation listed above, or to supply any other relevant documentation requested by the school, or to make a reasonable arrangement to meet the Principal to discuss the application if requested, may result in the application process being delayed.

Year other than 1st Year Enrolment Criteria:

1. Applicants must meet criteria laid down by the Department of Education & Skills.
2. All students entering the school must supply a Birth Certificate or other appropriate identification.

“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.”

3. In a year group other than First Year, where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, places will be allocated according to the following order of priority:
 - a) Applicants who have a sibling in the school. These applicants will be ranked on the basis of date and time of receipt of completed application.
 - b) Remaining places will be allocated on the basis of date and time of receipt of completed application. For applications with the same date and time of receipt of completed application, the final determining factor in allocating places will be random selection. This random selection process will be independently witnessed.
1. **Admission to repeat a year:** All such applications are subject to Department of Education & Skills Circular Letter M2/95. Applications will be considered in the light of places available on the relevant programme, subject to the class size and overall enrolment restrictions set out elsewhere in this policy. Applications must be in writing and must state the relevant Circular and the particular clause(s) being invoked in support of the application and must be accompanied by supporting documentation, as appropriate. The school must be satisfied that the applicant, in light of the special circumstances that gave rise to the application, applied him/herself to the best of their ability. Students taking a programme for the first time may be given priority in terms of subject choices within the programme. Priority will be given to St. Paul’s students, who are permitted by the school in accordance with Department of Education & Skills regulations, to repeat a school year.
2. **Admission to repeat the Leaving Certificate Programme:** The school does not operate a Repeat Leaving Certificate Programme. It does not normally provide any additional teaching to cover material normally covered in year 1 of the Leaving Certificate Programme. Students who apply to repeat the Leaving Certificate will be considered in the context of places available in the relevant subjects, the overall programme and overall enrolment within the school and

in the context of the student's previous academic record, application to studies, attendance, etc. Priority will be given to St. Paul's students.

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

Application forms are available from the School Office on request. Applicants should complete the application form, giving all of the details required. Incomplete forms will be returned to parents/guardians.

Applicants will be required to furnish details about their prior second-level education, including copies of their two most recent school reports that set out the results of in-house examinations and a reference from their current school. Where an applicant has attended more than one second-level school they may be required, at the discretion of the Board, to submit reports from each school and copies of the results of any State examinations.

Where it is considered necessary by the school, an applicant may be required to complete a further information form regarding their child's educational progress and/or to provide a current education psychological assessment report. Failure to complete any of the necessary documentation listed above, or to supply any other relevant documentation requested by the school, or to make a reasonable arrangement to meet the Principal to discuss the application if requested, may result in the application process being delayed.

Year other than 1st Year Enrolment Criteria:

4. Applicants must meet criteria laid down by the Department of Education & Skills.
5. All students entering the school must supply a Birth Certificate or other appropriate identification.
6. In a year group other than First Year, where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, places will be allocated according to the following order of priority:
 - c) Applicants who have a sibling in the school. These applicants will be ranked on the basis of date and time of receipt of completed application.
 - d) Remaining places will be allocated on the basis of date and time of receipt of completed application. For applications with the same date and time of receipt of completed application, the final determining factor in allocating places will be random selection. This random selection process will be independently witnessed.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St. Paul's Secondary School 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.

Note: Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

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 St. Paul's Secondary School without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

17. 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: _____

Larry O'Connor,

Chairperson, Board of Management

Reviewed on : _____

4/9/24