

Admission Policy of Loreto Community School

Milford , Co. Donegal

91500J

School Patron/s: Loreto Education Trust, Bishop of Raphoe and

Chief Executive of Donegal ETB

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 and children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron before the 14th of September 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hard copy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and time lines for Loreto Community 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 hard copy on request to any person who requests it.

Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Loreto Community School is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of The Bishop of Raphoe, the Loreto Education Trust and The Chief Executive of Donegal ETB.

Community Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Community Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established as a Community School under the Deed of Trust in 2006 having previously been Loreto College , Milford which was opened on 1st September 1966 by The Loreto Order. The values of Donegal ETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of The Bishop of Raphoe and The Loreto Education Trust are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Loreto Community School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning.

We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) constructed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, our school ,Loreto Community School provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Our school ,Loreto Community School provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In Loreto Community School, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

Admission Statement

Loreto Community 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.

Admission of Students

Loreto Community School will admit each student seeking admission except where

- A. The school is oversubscribed
- B. The parent or guardian fails to confirm in writing that they are accepting the place
- C. The parent or guardian has not signed up to the code of behaviour.

The Annual Admissions process for 1st year enrolment shall commence with the publication of the schools annual admission notice in local newspapers as well as the school website and Facebook page. This notice shall inform parents/guardians of the application process key dates as well as details of the number of places available and documents required for enrolment. Enrolment is open to all students who satisfy the following criteria:

- a) The applicant must be 12 years of age on the 1st January following enrolment.
- b) Primary education must be completed.
- c) Acceptance of the "Code of Behaviour", ethos and other policies of the school by the Parent/Guardian.

Procedure for First Year Enrolments ~ The following are our traditional feeder schools: Ayr Hill NS, Ballyheerin NS, Brownknowe NS, Cashel NS, Cashelshannaghan NS, Cranford NS, Croaghross NS, Devlinreagh NS, Doaghbeg NS, Downings NS, Drumfad NS, Drumhalla NS, Drumman NS, Kerrykeel NS, Kilmacrennan NS, Milford NS, Portlean NS, Tamney NS, Ramelton NS, Rathmullan NS and Scoil Eoin Baiste and these schools are traditionally visited in October of the year prior to enrolment. Application forms, transport forms, subject option forms, the school's Code of Behaviour, Prospectus and Admissions Policy are distributed during the visit.

An Open/Enrolment Night is held for parents and sixth class students. This includes an information meeting where application procedures, the curriculum, school rules and ethos are outlined. Time is allocated before and after this meeting for accepting applications for enrolment. This night is advertised in the local press and in the feeder schools. Completed applications, with the required documentation must be lodged in the School Office by the closing date stated above. The completed form should be accompanied by a birth certificate. Late applications may be considered depending on the availability of places at the time of application. In addition to

receiving reports from the Primary School subsequent to enrolment, Loreto Community School shall evaluate educational needs of the children through assessment/aptitude tests.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide the school with information and relevant reports regarding health, safety, educational needs of their child and any other information a school needs to know eg. Exempt Irish, right of access to a child etc. Applicants will be notified in writing within 21 days of the completion of the Assessment/Aptitude Test that they have been offered a place in Loreto Community School or their name has been placed on a waiting list for a place at Loreto Community School. The offer of a place must be accepted in writing (by return of acceptance slip) within two weeks of the date on the letter from the school offering the place.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the school office if they change address or if they have not received a letter from the school within 21 days of the Assessment/Aptitude Test. Applicants who do not accept the offer of a place by the date specified will forfeit the place which will be offered to the next applicant on the waiting list. Postal, telephone problems or other delays will not be accepted as an excuse for failure to meet the deadline of accepting the offer of a place within two weeks from the date on the letter from the school. Students shall be assigned to classes on a mixed ability basis. Gender (equal numbers of boys and girls in each class) or choice of subject may also be taken into account. Please note that when a Subject Option Form is not returned or is returned late, the school may allocate subjects to the student on an availability basis. From Second Year onwards, classes are streamed and/or banded for Irish, English and Maths. There are constraints based on the resources available eg teacher resources, restrictions on class sizes and viable class numbers ie. a minimum number is required.

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see 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.

Oversubscription

In the event that Loreto Community 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:

Due to factors such as available space and resources the Board of Management may have to determine a maximum for the number of

students to be enrolled in a class or year group which will be published in the annual admissions notice.

Enrolment is open to all students who satisfy the following criteria:

- a) The applicant must be 12 years of age on the 1st January following enrolment.
- b) Primary education must be completed.
- c) Acceptance of the “Code of Behaviour”, ethos and other policies of the school by the Parent/Guardian.

The Principal, subject to the approval of the Board of Management, will decide on the admission of the applicant.

Should the number of applicants in any year exceed the number of places, the following criteria will apply:

- 1) 1. Students from the following primary schools: Ayr Hill NS, Ballyheerin NS, Brownknowe NS, Cashel NS, Cashelshanaghan NS, Cranford NS, Croaghross NS, Devlinreagh NS, Doaghbeg NS, Downings NS, Drumfad NS, Drumhalla NS, Drumman NS, Kerrykeel NS, Kilmacrennan NS, Milford NS, Portlean NS, Tamney NS, Ramelton NS, Rathmullan NS and Scoil Eoin Baiste.
- 2) Students who live in the defined transport catchment area that Bus Eireann currently use to serve Loreto Community School, Milford.
- 3) Brothers and sisters of present students who live outside the defined transport catchment area.
- 4) Children of Staff or of BOM members.
- 5) Children who live outside the area as defined in points 1 and 2.

For any criterion, where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply:

- i. Brothers and sisters of current students.
- ii. Brothers and sisters of past students who completed at least one academic year at the school.
- iii. Children of past students who completed at least one academic year at the school.
- iv. Open Lottery with external supervision (details of which to be forwarded to any applicants involved).

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: A Lottery will take place overseen by the BOM with external supervision.

What will not be considered or taken into account.

- (a) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (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) 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 selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended Loreto Community School . This may only apply to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

- (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).

Decisions on Applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Loreto Community 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.

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 below for further details).

Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Loreto Community 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.

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 Loreto Community 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 above.

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.

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 Loreto Community 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 Loreto Community 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.

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.

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

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 are as follows:

Senior Cycle Enrolments

Third Year and Transition Year: Students receive a Subject Option Form during January/February. Before filling in the form, all students receive information about the various programmes and subjects from the Careers Teacher and/or the Programme Co-ordinator or individual Course Co-ordinators (LCVP, LCA, and Transition Year). An information evening is also held for the parents on the various options available. ~Subject Option Forms for Leaving Certificate Year 1 should be returned by the due closing date. The late return of forms may diminish the possibility of getting all the preferred subjects. Class size restrictions and the viability of subjects due to student numbers will be taken into consideration in deciding the curriculum for the year. Leaving Certificate Applied/ Transition Year Students who wish to be considered for enrolment in the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) or Transition Year should fill in the appropriate form and they may be required to attend for interview. The following criteria will apply: Class size will not exceed 24 students. A student's record of behaviour will be taken into account. A student's age may be taken into account. Preference will be given to students who have completed their Junior Cycle in Loreto Community School.

Repeat Leaving Cert

Applications should be made on the appropriate form before the due closing date. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the Student's Record of Behaviour to date, their application to study and their performance in the Leaving Certificate. All applicants will also have to attend a meeting with the Guidance Counsellor to assess whether the option to repeat would be beneficial to the student. Specific conditions may be placed on repeating. Every effort will be made to accommodate students in the subjects and levels required taking into account the Subject Option Blocks and Class Size Restrictions. Priority will be given to students who completed their Leaving Certificate in Loreto Community School.

Application to Transfer from other Schools

Student transfers are generally only accepted for the beginning of an academic year and not during the academic year. Students who wish to transfer must complete Transfer Forms and Enrolment Forms. When the student has been offered a place, some information will be required from the student's present school regarding educational progress, attendance, reports, special needs, reasons for transfer, psychological reports etc. The student and a parent/guardian will attend a meeting with either the Principal or Deputy Principals. The availability of resources and of spaces in specific subject areas or in the year group may determine the capacity to admit a student.

Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The Board of Management of Loreto Community 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
- (b) The admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Loreto Community School offers *religious education* in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, *religious education* supports the 'multi-denominational' aspect of our school's ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between '*religious education*' and '*religious instruction*':

Religious education is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.

Religious instruction is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

Where Religious Instruction or worship such as a School Mass or Service does take place an alternative option of supervised study will be made available to students not wishing to take part. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students.

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.

