



Admission Policy of St Vincent's Secondary School

School Address: St Mary's Road, Cork City

Roll number: 62590A

School Patron/s: Religious Sisters of Charity

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 11/9/2020. 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. Vincent's 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

St. Vincent's Secondary School is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of The Religious Sisters of Charity.

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

- a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, 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,

and which school provides religious education 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.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Vincent'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.

ST. VINCENT'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mary Aikenhead, who was a Cork woman, founded the Irish Sisters of Charity in 1815. Her aim, in response to God's call, was to make available to the poor what the rich were able to buy in the areas of health, education, social services.

TRUSTEES

In 1857 the Sisters of Charity started teaching girls in St. Vincent's. A Board of Management was set up in 1991 to take charge of the running of St. Vincent's Secondary School. This board consists of eight members who are appointed by the Trustees. Four of these members are nominated by the Trustees. The spirit of enthusiasm and dedication of the Sisters of Charity is shared by these nominees.

The Trustees continue to own the school and all major projects and refurbishment are sanctioned by them. The Provincial Team keeps contact with and visits St. Vincent's regularly. They also provide financial assistance for various projects.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Vincent's is a Religious Sisters' of Charity Secondary School. It has its origins in a school founded by Mary Aikenhead in 1857. The School Community of St. Vincent's continues to be inspired by her motto:

**'Caritas Christi Urget
Nos' The Love of Christ
inspires us.**

St. Vincent's is a Catholic girls' secondary school for girls only. We recognise the uniqueness and needs of all our students, staff, parents and partners. Through a broad based curriculum, we aim to educate each student so that she may achieve her full personal, social, spiritual and academic potential. We welcome the participation of all our partners in the life of our school community.

THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Vincent's is a Catholic school (for girls only) owned and managed by the Religious Sisters of Charity. The school concentrates on the development of the whole person, by providing for the religious, moral, social, physical and intellectual growth of the students. The school strives for academic excellence while recognising the need constantly to develop a curriculum where compassion and co-operation are given a higher value than competition. The religious education of students is, and is seen to be, of fundamental importance. The school is committed to enabling students to develop a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others. The school seeks means of working effectively towards curriculum development in the light of the changing needs of the students. Good relationships between home and school are encouraged, as these are essential to the educational process.

St. Vincent's Secondary School is committed to:

- **Witness of Gospel values**
- **Curriculum innovations**
- **Equality**
- **Respect for the environment**
- **Justice**

3. Admission Statement

St. Vincent'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.

Schools must retain any of the following statements that apply to them and delete those that do not:

Single gender schools

St. Vincent's Secondary School is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

Post-primary denominational schools

St. Vincent'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 a Catholic denomination in preference to others.

All denominational schools

St. Vincent'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)

St. Vincent's Secondary School 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 ASC 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 catered for in the school/special class

St. Vincent's Secondary School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with ASC Autistic Spectrum Condition and has established the Lir Hub to help cater for these students within our school community.

St. Vincent's Secondary School ASC class(es) (The Lir Hub) reflects the inclusive ethos of our school. Our aim is to allow our students to develop to their full learning potential, in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm. We recognize the importance of enabling students on the autism spectrum to belong to an educational community without prejudice and within which individual difference is celebrated.

It is strongly recommended but not a requirement or condition of admission that Parents/Guardians seeking to enrol a student should make an appointment with the Special Educational Needs coordinator & ASC class teacher at the earliest opportunity to discuss the support provided in the ASC class and the needs of the applicant.

The standard enrolment procedures apply in the first instance in conjunction with the following procedures & documentation:

- All students applying for a place The Hub should apply in the same way as all applicants, following the standard enrolment procedures and on the standard enrolment form.
- The applicant must have a primary diagnosis of Autism meeting DSM IV/V or ICD 10 diagnostic criteria and a recommendation that they require the support of a special class in a mainstream setting.
- All applications must be accompanied by a recent multi-disciplinary report or assessment completed by qualified, registered psychologists/therapists. Applications must also be accompanied BY any other relevant reports and information from any support service involved with the student. Withholding reports from the school may invalidate an enrolment application.
- The recommendation of the Special Educational Needs Organizer (SENO) for the area.
- The applicant should be capable of some integration into mainstream classes & curriculum at a meaningful level and appropriate age. A diagnosis of significant intellectual impairment would prevent mainstream integration.

The following criteria will apply in allocating places in the ASC special class:

That there is available space. Presently there are four class(es) in the school catering for a total of 24 students.

- That the needs of the student as identified can be met within the ASC class.
- Where there are more applicants than places the criteria for selection as outlined in Section 6 Oversubscription in this policy will apply. Where these criteria are exhausted the remaining places will be allocated by lottery.



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)
- 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.

Include only the statements that apply to the school:

A school that admits students of one gender only

St Vincent's Secondary School provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

All denominational schools

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

School with special education class(es)

The special class attached to St. Vincent's Secondary School provides an education exclusively for ASC (Autistic Spectrum Condition) 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 (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:

Criteria in order of priority for allocation of places. (These will apply if applications received prior to the closing date exceed the number of available places as determined by the Board of Management).

Category 1:

Students attending St. Vincent's Primary School have automatic entry (provided application is in by due date).

However, students who transfer to St. Vincent's Primary School in 4th., 5th. or 6th Class do not have automatic entry. (If a student transfers to St. Vincent's Primary school because the family has moved into the catchment area of the school then she would gain automatic access)

If the reason for transfer to St. Vincent's Primary School does not meet with the above, then a student's placement cannot be guaranteed and those applicants will be transferred to Category 6.

Category 2:

Sisters of students present and past (provided application is in by due date).

**Category 3:**

Daughters of present staff (provided application is in by due date).

Category 4 :

Daughters of past pupils (provided application is in by due date).

In the event that, having catered to applicants in categories 1 – 3 above, there are remaining places available - only 25% of those remaining places will be allocated to students in Category 4.

E.G: If 100 places are allocated in categories 1- 3 and there are 40 places remaining then 25% of those places will be allocated to Category 4 which is equivalent to 10 places.

Note: If there are more applicants in Cat. 4 than there are places available, then a Lottery will take place.

Category 5 :

Girls currently (at the time of application) enrolled in Sixth Class in a primary school which has traditionally provided students for St. Vincent's Secondary School (provided application is in by due date).

The list of schools in the catchment area can be found in an Appendix A to this policy.

No preferential order is applied.

1. St. Mary's on the Hill, Knockanheeny
2. Scoil Oilibhear, Dublin Hill
3. Scoil Aiseiri Christ, Farranree
4. Scoil Peig Sayers, Farraferris
5. St. Brendan's G.N.S, The Glen
6. Sunday's Well GNS, Strawberry Hill
7. Kerrypike/ Clogheen National School
8. North Presentation Primary School, Blackpool
9. Rathpeacon N.S., Rathpeacon
10. Scoil Padre Pio, Churchfield

Category 6 :

All other applications

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:

All applications received prior to the closing date will be allocated places on the basis of a lottery, supervised by a nominee of the Parents Association, a nominee of the Student Council, a nominee of the Board of Management and an independent observer, external to the school. Applicants who do not receive a place at this stage will be placed on a numbered waiting list in the order in which they were drawn in the lottery. Parents shall be informed of their daughter's place on the waiting list. If a vacancy arises it will be offered to the applicant highest on the waiting list.

In all cases, when a lottery is being conducted, applications received on behalf of twins, triplets, or sisters from the same family unit will be treated as one applicant. This will neither increase nor reduce the chances of any applicant being offered a place.



7. 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 pre-school 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; (other than in relation to:
 - admission to (a) a special school or (b) a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and/or
- (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 and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student 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.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Vincent'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.

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 St Vincent'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 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 may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St. Vincent'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.

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.

- (i) 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 St. Vincent'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. Vincent'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.

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

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:

An application for student admission to St. Vincent's Secondary School to a year other than the school's intake group must be submitted on the Application Form for Student Transfer available upon request from the school office or web site.

Decisions on application for admission to any year other than first year will be decided in the first instance by the Principal using the following criteria:

- The availability of a place in the year group
- The student transfer is within the terms of the school's Admissions Policy.
- A fully completed Application Form for Student Transfer is received, including all relevant information and documentation required under the terms of this policy and specified on the Application Form for Student Transfer (including information from the student's former school where applicable). Applications which are incomplete, not signed, not dated and/or do not include the required documentation will not be accepted.
- The transfer is of educational benefit to the student.
- Due account is taken of the availability of space in the school, in the specific class and in subject options, the suitability and availability of the subjects taught and the levels at which they are taught and the subject options available to the student. The maximum class size is 30 for general subjects, 24 for practical and science and 20 for Home Economics. Students must comply with the Department of Education and Skills requirement regarding 28 hours of tuition per week.

Note: Priority will be given to present St. Vincent's Secondary School students for entry into the Transition Year Programme.

Where a student is considered for a place, the decision will be taken by the Principal, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians.

The decision of the Principal may be appealed to the Board of Management.

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.

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

The board of St. Vincent's Secondary School 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

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