Admission Policy of Our Lady of Lourdes N.S.

School Address: Ballinlough Road, Cork T12 RR98

Roll number: 17313P

School Patron: Bishop of Cork and Ross

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 10/3/2025 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 Our Lady of Lourdes N.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.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. is a Catholic all girls primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork and Ross.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary 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 for the pupils 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 Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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.

The staff of Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. aim to provide a happy and secure environment which is conducive to the spiritual, moral, social and physical growth of our pupils, both individually and collectively. We aspire to create an atmosphere of learning in a stimulating and positive manner and thereby achieve high academic standards.

Each and every child is cherished and respected. It is hoped to foster in each child a sense of self worth and of belonging and pride in Our Lady of Lourdes School. The staff work as a dedicated team and each member makes a valuable contribution to Curriculum Planning and is involved in the decision making process.

We see our school as a partnership between parents and teachers in which we work together to enable each child to realise her potential so that she may go on to lead a full life in society.

3. Admission Statement

Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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.

Single gender schools
Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

All denominational schools
Our Lady of Lourdes N.S.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 of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. is a school which has established a Special Class, with the approval of the Minister for Education & Skills. This class provides 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. The class enrols girls with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum disorder.

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

Our Lady of Lourdes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established one Special Class to provide education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Enrolment of Children with Special Educational Needs (See also Appendix 1):

Our Lady of Lourdes is an inclusive school which caters for children with special educational needs. We strive to provide for the educational needs of all our pupils, helping them to reach their potential.

Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. will co-operate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, in relation to the provision of educational to the children with special educational needs, including in particular, the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. will comply with any direction served on the Board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

In relation to applications for the enrolment of children with special educational needs the Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report and all relevant professional reports, or where such a report is not available, will request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his disability or special needs and to profile the support services required for both pupil and teacher.

Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request the Special Education Needs Organiser (NCSE see Circular 01/05) to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: S.E.T, SNA, visiting teacher service, assistive technology, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other.

The school will meet with the parents of the child and with the SENO to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. Where necessary, a full case conference involving all relevant parties will be held, which may include the following relevant parties; parents, Principal, Deputy-Principal, class teacher, S.E.T, Special Educational Needs Organiser or psychologist and other professionals as deemed appropriate.

Our Lady of Lourdes has one ASD special class. Students who apply must have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (DSM-IV/V or ICD-10/11) and supporting original documentation in order to be considered for enrolment in the ASD Special Class. A pupil's placement needs to be as accurate a reflection of her needs as possible so that the child can be given a reasonable opportunity to integrate into the mainstream setting.

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. Parents are asked to openly engage with the relevant professionals on a regular basis to ensure the child is in the appropriate setting.

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

c) In relation to the ASD special class the aforementioned criteria (see section 4) are not met or the degree of the student's needs are such that to do so would be inconsistent with (A) the best interests of the child in accordance with any assessment carried out under the Act or (B) the effective provision for children with whom the child is to be educated. Parents are asked to openly engage with relevant agencies and professionals in a continued effort to ensure the child is in an appropriate setting.

A school that admits students of one gender only
Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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
Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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.

The Special Class in Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. provides an education exclusively for students of Autism Spectrum Disorder and the school may refuse admission to this class where the student concerned does not have the specified category of a special educational needs provided for in this class.

The school must be made aware of (a) any medications that the applicant pupils may be in receipt of either at home or in the course of the school day (b) any additional medical conditions and or dietary restrictions or requirements that the child may have.

Where relevant signed consent will be required from parents/guardians granting the school permission to access relevant information/reports and assessments and to discuss their child at local meetings to ensure that the appropriate planning and provision of educational services are made available.

Parents/guardians must accept and agree to the school's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy. This must be signed by the Parents/Guardians.

Refusal to enrol
The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment/admission to any student where either:

1. The student has needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health, the school cannot meet the needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.

2. The school endeavours to support each child on an individual basis and ensure that it is an appropriate school placement for the child. However, if it is the opinion of the Board of Management that the student poses an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the child themselves and/or other students, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made by the Board of Management not to enrol the child and/or to exclude the child from the school.

Progression

The school facilitates the progression of pupils once they have reached the age of thirteen by the last academic day of the school year. However, pupils who reach the age of thirteen after that date in any year will be permitted to complete a final academic year. This means a June progression in the following year before they turn fourteen. Thirteen is the maximum age for a pupil to reach on commencement of their final year in the school.

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:

1. Sisters of girls already enrolled
2. Girls currently living within the geographical boundaries of the parish of Ballinlough
3. Children of staff
4. Daughters and granddaughters of past pupils, priority to the oldest child subject to a max. of 25 % of the available places
5. Date of birth with priority being given to the oldest child

It should be noted that sisters/daughters, include step sister and step daughter

Special Class Enrolment Criteria
If the number of children on the Waiting List exceeds the number of places available, the following prioritising criteria are used:

1. Applications for girls currently enrolled in Our Lady of Lourdes N.S.
2. Applications for sisters of pupils already enrolled.
3. Girls currently living within the geographical boundaries of the parish of Ballinlough.
4. Children of Staff.
5. Daughters and granddaughters of past pupils, priority to the oldest child, subject to a max of 25% of the available places.
6. Date of birth with priority being given to the oldest child.

It should be noted that sisters/daughters, include step sister and step daughter.

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:

Mainstream Enrolment Selection Criteria:

Priority will be given to applicants within the particular category in order of age, starting with the older/oldest child.

Special Class Enrolment Selection Criteria:
Priority will be given to applicants within the particular category closest in age to the oldest enrolled child.

Priority will be given to the older/oldest child.

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:

(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;

(d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;

(e) a requirement that a student, 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 her family attending or having previously attended the school with the exception of [1] sisters of current pupils and [2] daughters and granddaughters of past pupils up to a maximum of 25% of the available places

(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 Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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 Our Lady of Lourdes N.S., 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.

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 Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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) If criteria for admission to the ASD Special Class are not met
(vi) If there is no available place in the ASD Special Class.
(vii) If there is no available place in the school.

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 certain information 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 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 Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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 Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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 no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

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:

The board of management will consider the requests for admission based on the availability in the class for which the admission request is being made.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. 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.

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 have 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 written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) 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, 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 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.

Evaluation
The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of the policy and review and amend the policy as required, with particular emphasis placed upon –

- Effective management of the application process.
- Clarity and transparency relating to the process.
- Applicants informed in good time re the status of their application, particularly in the case of the school's inability to enrol children from the school catchment area.

Monitoring Procedures
The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Board of Management at the appropriate time.

Signed: Mercedes Campion
MERCEDES CAMPION
Principal

Signed: Brian Twomey
BRIAN TWOMEY
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 20/3/2025

APPENDIX 1

ADMISSIONS POLICY – AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER SPECIAL CLASS

Our Aim

Our Special ASD Class aims to offer an autistic specific learning environment within a mainstream national school. The setting facilitates optimum inclusion, and reverse inclusion, as part of the school community with access to mainstream classrooms and activities as appropriate.

Enrolment Procedure

1. Initial contact is made by parents/guardians/SENO in relation to the child by completing a Pre-Enrolment Form. This does not constitute confirmation of enrolment. This form must be returned within 2 weeks from the date of issue.
2. Parents wishing to enrol their child in a Special Class –
    - Should notify the NCSE by 1st February and engage with them on a variety of options which are available to meet the needs of their child.
    - Parents/guardians should send the child's report to the NCSE where it will be reviewed.
    - Parents/guardians should obtain a letter from the NCSE to submit with their admission application for a Special Class, confirming that the child meets the requirements for enrolment to that setting.
3. Applicants are required to provide every report from an Educational or Clinical Psychologist or Psychiatrist and a multidisciplinary team or any variation thereof. These should clearly recommend that a placement in a Special Class in a mainstream school is suitable for the student.
4. The withholding of reports from the school may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.
5. Students who apply must have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (DSM IV/V or ICD-10/11) and supporting original documentation in order to be considered for enrolment in the ASD Special Class. A pupil's placement needs to be as accurate a reflection of her needs as possible so that the child can be given a reasonable opportunity to integrate into the mainstream setting.
6. Parents/guardians will agree to share the content and copies of any further reports obtained at a later date with the school.
7. Applications will in the first instance be reviewed by the Principal and relevant staff member/s to determine the suitability of the ASD class for placement of the child in the Special Class at Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. The school will be advised by the SENO. A recommendation will be made in relation to each application to the Board of Management of the school. The Board of Management will apply the directions of this policy and make the final decision on all applications.
8. Once this process has been completed, the applicant is placed on a waiting list of applicants to enrol. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing if and when their child has secured a place. The school application form, incorporating family details, is then completed for children who have secured a place.