

Loreto Secondary School, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Admissions Policy for 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024

The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Bray, Co. Wicklow, here sets out its admissions policy for the three academic years 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 for the information and assistance of parents/guardians in relation to enrolment matters. Further clarification on matters arising from this policy can be obtained by telephoning the school office at (01) 2867481 or by emailing the school at *info@loretobray.com*.

1. Type of School

Loreto Secondary School Bray, founded in 1850, is an all-girls Catholic voluntary secondary school under the patronage of the Loreto Education Trust.

2. Characteristic Spirit

The Loreto philosophy of education is centred in God and is rooted in Gospel values where truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy find expression.

Loreto Secondary School Bray endeavours to provide a caring and respectful community, which promotes the growth of each individual. We strive to create a supportive learning environment, which encourages each person to develop her full spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and social potential.

Mary Ward's core values – justice, freedom, sincerity, truth and joy – are the foundation of the spirituality of the school community. Discernment, involving reflection on experience leading to action, will inform and influence policies, structures, practices and teaching.

Education in a Loreto school:

- Strives for the all round development of the student
- Promotes Catholic values, attitudes and principles.
- Affirms the personal worth and dignity of each student.
- Fosters awareness of the responsibility to work for peace, justice and unity in society.
- Endeavours to encourage excellence in all areas of the student's life in an atmosphere of interest, concern and friendship for each person.

Our characteristic spirit is underpinned by a philosophy of education that has at its centre the unique dignity of the human person as a child of God. The school sees the interaction of people from different backgrounds—spiritual, ethnic, language, special needs—as a gift that will enrich the community of the school and promote the growth and learning of all. Therefore, the school values each student and their family.

3. Admission Statement

Loreto Secondary School Bray shall not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on the grounds of civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community or in respect of the student concerned having special educational needs.

As Loreto Secondary School Bray is an all-girls school it is not deemed to be acting in a discriminatory manner when it refuses to enrol boys. In the circumstances where a student transitions from female to male while in attendance at Loreto Secondary School Bray, the school will discuss with the student and his parents/guardians the most appropriate way to respond to the needs of the student, within the resources available to the school and in the context of inclusiveness and respect for the unique dignity of the student as a child of God.

4. Operating Context

Loreto Secondary School Bray operates within the context of:

- The legislation and regulations of the Department of Education and Skills
- The rights of trustees as set out in the Education Act, 1998
- The religious and educational philosophy of the Loreto Education Trust
- The funding and resources available to the school at any given time.

Loreto Secondary School Bray is a school that:

- Is inclusive in intake
- Supports the principle of equality of access to and participation in education
- Recognises and supports the rights of parents/guardians to choose with regard to enrolment in secondary school
- Welcomes students with different values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life and seeks to meet their particular needs, subject only to available resources and support for the ethos of the school.

School Resources:

- The financial and teaching resources of the school are provided by a combination of grants and teacher allocations from the Department of Education and Skills, voluntary contributions, and occasional fundraising
- Implementation of the school plan and school policy must have due regard to the resources and funding available.

Curricular Context:

Loreto Secondary School Bray operates within the regulations of the Department of Education and Skills and follows the curricular programmes so prescribed, which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act, 1998.

5. Code of Behaviour for Students

Loreto Secondary School Bray has a detailed Code of Behaviour for students. It outlines the system of rewards and sanctions which the school operates in order to promote a climate which facilitates the teaching and learning that is at the heart of the school's educational mission. It also sets out the procedures the school follows to suspend or expel a student and the relevant appeals procedure available to those who may wish to use it. The Code of Behaviour is available on the school's website: www.loretobray.com. Prospective students and their parents/guardians should familiarise themselves with the school's Code of Behaviour, which they will be required to accept. They are further expected to support the school in its enforcement.

6. Enrolment Procedures and Admission Criteria

This section sets out the policy of the school with regard to enrolment procedures and admission criteria for entry into First Year for the three academic years 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

6.1 Students eligible for admission to First Year

To be eligible for admission to First Year, students must:

- Have reached the age of 12 years by 1st January of the calendar year following entry into First Year (as required by Department of Education and Skills regulations)
- Have completed Sixth Class in Primary School or its equivalent
- Be willing, in conjunction with their parents/guardians, to accept the Characteristic Spirit of the school
- Be willing, in conjunction with their parents/guardians, to accept the school's Code of Behaviour and related policies
- Be willing to sit an Assessment Test, the date for which will be communicated in writing to the parents/guardians of the students accepted for enrolment at the school
- Be willing to complete the detailed student data form that will be issued following acceptance for enrolment.

6.2 Numbers Admitted and Order of Criteria

Loreto Secondary School Bray normally admits one hundred and fifty (150) students to First Year each year in five class groups of thirty students each. The exact number of students to be admitted in any particular year will be determined by the Board of Management two years prior to that year. Places will only be offered to those parents/guardians who have completed a Declaration of Interest Form.

In the event that the number of Declaration of Interest Forms exceeds, or is expected to exceed, the number of places available in the relevant year, the Board of Management will apply the following criteria in the order listed below in the allocation of places.

Category A: Sisters of current students (It should be noted that at the time of allocation **of places** the applicant must have a sister in the school or have a sister who has been allocated and accepted a place but has not yet commenced attending the school).

Category B: Pupils from St. Patrick's, Loreto Primary School Bray Co Wicklow

Category C: All others in order of position on the **Waiting List for Admission** (see below).

In addition to the above, the Board of Management reserves the right to allocate a small number of discretionary places, to allow for special family circumstances that might arise from time to time.

6.3 Enrolment Procedures:

There are two stages in the enrolment process. First of all, parents/guardians must complete a Declaration of Interest Form (see section 6.4 below) for one of the three academic years 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. Then, when the pupil is in Fifth Class, usually in the autumn, places will be offered to 150 pupils whose names are on the relevant Waiting List for Admission in the order set out above in 6.2.

6.4 Applying for a place on the Waiting List for Admission in 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024:

The Declaration of Interest Forms for each of these three years will be made available on Monday 16th May 2016 from 9.30 a.m. but will not be accepted for processing until Wednesday 18th May 2016 from 9.30 a.m.

All forms received by 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday 25th May 2016 will be treated as having been received at the same time. The name of each pupil on forms in Category C received between 18th May 2016 and 25th May 2016 inclusive will be placed in a drum and their order on the relevant Waiting List will be determined by lottery (see below).

Any forms received after 4.30 p.m. on 25th May 2016 will be dealt with in order of receipt after those received between 18th May 2016 and 25th May 2016 inclusive. For example, if 46 forms were received from pupils in Category C between 9.30 a.m. on 18th May 2016 and 4.30 p.m. on 25th May 2016 inclusive, then any forms received after 4.30 p.m. on 25th May 2016 or on the following days would be placed on the relevant Waiting List in order of receipt starting at number 47.

6.5 The Lottery process and the Waiting List:

The lottery process that will be used will be overseen by the Principal or Deputy Principal and will be witnessed by a representative of the Board of Management and a member of the Parents' Association. The names on the Declaration of Interest Forms relating to pupils in Category C above, received between 18th May 2016 and 25th May 2016 inclusive, will be placed in a drum. Declaration of Interest Forms received on behalf of twins, triplets, or sisters from the same family unit will be treated as one applicant. The Principal or Deputy Principal will draw the names

from the drum, one by one, until the drum is empty. The order in which the names are drawn from the drum will be recorded on a numbered list.

The names on any Declaration of Interest Forms received after 4.30 p.m. on 25th May 2016 will then be added to the end of the Waiting List in date order of receipt in the office.

6.6 Important Points to Note:

- Everyone must follow the enrolment procedure.
- All applications for a place on the Waiting List must be made at least two years prior to admission. **This time period restriction may be waived by the Board of Management in the exercise of its right to allocate a small number of discretionary places to allow for special family circumstances that might arise from time to time.**
- Declaration of Interest Forms received by post are dealt with at the end of the day of receipt in the school office.
- The Board of Management's decision on any application is final.
- The Board of Management points out that if an applicant under Category A applies for a place under that category and the sister, currently a student in the school, ceases to be a student of Loreto Secondary School Bray then that application will be considered under Category B or Category C – as applicable – in the order in which it was received.

6.7 Offer of Places:

Places will be offered in the autumn of the school year two years prior to entry, that is, the autumn of the student's Fifth Class in Primary school.

Places will be allocated as follows:

- Places will be offered to applicant pupils from Category A above.
- Having offered places under Category A, places will be offered to applicant pupils under Category B above.
- Having offered places under Category A and Category B, the remaining places will be offered to applicant pupils under Category C above in the order of their position on the relevant Waiting List.

6.8 Acceptance of Places:

To accept a place in Loreto Secondary School parents/guardians must:

- i. Fulfil the conditions set out in the section above: **6.1 Students eligible for admission to First Year**
- ii. Complete and return the Loreto Secondary School Bray Certified Application Form within the set time limit
- iii. Pay the appropriate Acceptance Bond. The amount of the Acceptance Bond will be set by the Board of Management prior to the offer of places. This bond must be paid by parents/guardians when they return the Acceptance Form. The amount will be refunded to the parents/guardians once their daughter commences First Year.

Parents/Guardians can opt at that stage to offset the refund due against the Voluntary Contribution or any other school expenses that might arise. The purpose of the acceptance bond is to discourage parents/guardians from accepting places in other schools, thereby blocking a place that could be offered to another child on the Waiting List. In the event that parents/guardians decide not to send their daughter to Loreto Secondary School, Bray, the bond will not be refunded. The bond is NOT an admission fee as it is refundable once the child commences First Year. Any family that may have difficulty paying the amount should contact the school Principal to discuss alternative payment options.

- iv. The receipt of all properly completed Certified Application Forms will be acknowledged within 21 days of the time limit referred to at (ii) above.

6.9 Students with Special Educational Needs

In welcoming applications from students with special educational needs, the school will use the resources, finance and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to make reasonable provision and accommodation for all such students and will ensure that these students are free to participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonably practicable. While recognising and fully supporting parents'/guardians' right to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to provide for students with particular educational needs is dependent on resources, suitable to the needs of the individual student, being supplied by the DES. Parents/guardians will be asked co-operate with the school, from the earliest possible time, to identify and establish the special educational needs of the student, in order to request from the DES or its agencies the appropriate resources required to meet the student's needs.

Loreto Secondary School Bray strives to create an inclusive environment for students with special needs, unless the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned and/or the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated.

Applicants with special needs must meet the entry criteria set out for all students in this policy. The regular admissions procedures must also be adhered to. The existence of special needs requirements does not give any individual applicant any prioritised entry entitlement.

7. Transfer of Students from Other Schools

In the case of students wishing to transfer to Loreto Secondary School Bray from another school for any reason whatsoever, information concerning the prospective student's attendance record, educational progress to date, behaviour record and impact on the learning environment for other students in the classroom will be required. The school that the student is leaving will be contacted and the parents/guardians must agree to allow that school to supply all relevant information to the Principal of Loreto Secondary

School Bray. A meeting with the Principal or Deputy Principal may be arranged with the parents/guardians and the prospective student to obtain further information. The application for admission to Loreto Secondary School Bray will be judged in the light of all this information and subject to the availability of a vacancy in a suitable class. If the school considers that the student may have special educational needs, then an appropriate psychological assessment must be provided to the school and the enrolment application will be considered in the light of that assessment and subject to the details outlined in this paragraph.

8. Board of Management's Right to Refuse Admission

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could include the following:

- The student has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education or
- In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

9. Appeals

The final decision with regard to the enrolment of students in Loreto Secondary School, Bray and with regard to all matters covered by this Admissions Policy lies with the Board of Management.

Parents/Guardians whose daughter has not been allocated a place in the school may appeal this decision in the first instance to the Board of Management and subsequently, if necessary, to the Department of Education and Science, under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998).

The appeal to the Department of Education and Science must be made within 42 calendar days from the date that the decision of the Board of Management was notified to the parents/guardians. The Appeals Application Form can be downloaded from the website: www.education.ie or obtained from the school office.

10. Review & Ratification

This policy is subject to review at the discretion of the Board but sufficiently in advance to allow changes to be communicated to interested parties.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 6th April 2016.