

# **Admission Policy**

## **Loreto Secondary School, Bray, Co. Wicklow**

**Roll Number : 61820J**

**School Patron: Loreto Education Trust**

### **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 **19<sup>th</sup> August 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 Loreto Secondary School, Bray's admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

### **2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

Loreto Secondary School, Bray, founded in 1850, is a Catholic all-girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of Loreto Education Trust. Loreto schools seek to provide an education that affirms the innate dignity of every human being created in God's image, and fosters the full and harmonious development of each student, encompassing the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects in an environment of justice, freedom, sincerity, truth and joy.

The creation of a dynamic school community where every student is equally cherished and has a real sense of belonging is a priority in a Loreto school which draws its inspiration from Gospel values and the rich heritage passed on to us from Mary Ward and Teresa Ball<sup>1</sup>, and enshrined in our documents on Loreto Education,

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<sup>1</sup> The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in 1609 by Mary Ward and Teresa Ball brought this tradition which she named Loreto to Ireland in 1821.

including *Kolkata Educational Guidelines for Loreto Schools, Continuing the Journey: A Loreto Education* and *A Mary Ward Schools' Compass*.

Students are encouraged to be reflective and discerning in the spirit of our Loreto and Ignatian tradition and continue to grow with integrity in right relationship with God, with other people and the environment.

Our philosophy of holistic education places the person of the student at the centre of the educational enterprise which nurtures the student's capacity to "seek truth ... to love what is good ... to strive for excellence" (Teresa Ball) and joyfully engage with life-long self-directed learning in all its dimensions. In so doing, we are committed to preparing students to take their place in society as generous, confident, perceptive, well-informed, articulate and compassionate people ready to contribute to the common good.

Loreto schools welcome students of all faiths and of none while maintaining a Catholic ethos. Inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue together with a spirit of inclusivity and the celebration of diversity are fostered in the school.

In harmony with our characteristic spirit and recognising that care of faith and education are fundamental to the Loreto tradition, Religious Education is central to our curriculum and the faith formation of Catholic students is supported by the school in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church. Each student's spiritual life is expressed and deepened through prayer, ritual in the cycle of the liturgical year, reflection on the profound link between faith and justice and creative engagement with the dialogue of faith and life communicated in nature, in science and in the arts.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School Bray 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.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Loreto Secondary School, Bray 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.

Loreto Secondary School, Bray is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

Loreto Secondary School, Bray 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 the Roman Catholic denomination in preference to others.

Loreto Secondary School, Bray 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 Roman Catholic denomination and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### **4. Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see Section 5 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) The student will not have reached her twelfth birthday before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January that falls during her first academic year in the school. (Department of Education and Skills' regulation).

Loreto Secondary School, Bray 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.

Loreto Secondary School, Bray is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Roman Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

## 5. 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:

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 and sisters of past-pupils who have completed senior cycle in Loreto Secondary School, Bray.

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

**Category C:** Daughters of eligible employees of Loreto Secondary School, Bray. Staff members will be deemed to be eligible if they are in the employment of the Board of Management on a non-casual basis, during normal school hours, for at least six months, and are reasonably expected to be still employed by the Board of Management at the time their daughter commences in Loreto Secondary School.

**Category D:** **For the school years 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024:** In June 2016, supervised lotteries were held to compile waiting lists for the three years, 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. The lotteries included the names of possible applicants for each of the three years received by the school between 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Students whose names were placed on one of these lists will be allocated places in the school year concerned, in order of their priority on the relevant list.

**For the school years 2024/2025 and following:** There are no existing waiting lists and a waiting list for admission for each year will be compiled as set out in Section 12 below, (Waiting list for First Year in the event of oversubscription).

## 6. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; (other than in relation to admission to 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)

- (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 siblings of a student attending the school (see Category A above);
- (f) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, except in the circumstances set out in Section 14 below.

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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## **7. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Loreto Secondary School Bray 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 13 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and Section 14 below in relation to applications for places in years other than First Year and for applications made during the school year.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

## **8. Notifying applicants of decisions**

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see Section 17 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Loreto Secondary School Bray, the applicant must indicate—

- (i) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and
- (ii) whether or not they have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, they 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.

## **10. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn**

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Loreto Secondary School Bray 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;
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in Section 9 above;
- (v) the student will not have reached her twelfth birthday before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January that falls during her first academic year in the school. (Department of Education and Skills' regulation); or
- (vi) 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. 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.

## 11. 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 ).

## 12. Waiting list for First Year in the event of oversubscription

Once places have been allocated to Categories A, B and C (as set out in Section 5 above), there will be a number of remaining places available to applicants outside these categories to bring the total admitted to First Year in the school to the number set by the Board of Management, normally 150 places. The number of these remaining places will vary from year to year depending on number of applicants from Categories A, B and C.

**For the three years, 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024,** once places have been allocated to Categories A, B and C, then remaining places will be offered to those in Category D (as set out in Section 5 above), in the order in which they appear in the relevant existing waiting list. If, after this process, there are still some places remaining, then these places will be offered to applicants who have applied for admission to First Year in the relevant year.

In the event that there are more properly completed applications for these final remaining spaces than places available, then a random selection process will be conducted based on a lottery (see below).

**For the school years 2024/2025 and following**, there is no category D and places remaining after places have been allocated to Categories A, B and C (as set out in Section 5 above) will be offered to applicants who have applied for admission to First Year in the relevant year.

In the event that there are more properly completed applications for these remaining spaces than places available, then a random selection process will be conducted based on a lottery (see below).

#### **The Lottery Process & Waiting List for First Year:**

This lottery process will be supervised by the Principal, witnessed by a nominee of the Board of Management and a member of the Parents' Association and overseen by an independent observer such as a member of An Garda Síochána or a Commissioner of Oaths or a Peace Commissioner. The names of the students will be placed in a drum/box and the Principal will draw the names from the drum/box, one by one, until the drum/box is empty. Applications received on behalf of twins, triplets, or sisters from the same family unit will be treated as one applicant in the lottery process. The order in which the names are drawn from the drum/box will be recorded on a numbered waiting list for First Year places. **The remaining places will be allocated to the applicants in the order in which they appear in the numbered waiting list.**

This Waiting List for First Year places will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

### **13. Late Applications for First Year**

All applications for admission to First Year 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 end of First Year waiting list, in date order of receipt.

### **14. Procedures for admission of students to a year group other than First Year and/or to any year group during the school year**

Where parents wish to make an application for their daughter to a year group other than First Year or during the school year, they should in the first instance fill in an Application Form. An offer of a place can only be made if there is space in the year group in question. A decision on whether a place can be offered will be conveyed to the parents within 21 days of the initial application. Applications made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year will be refused until the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year

groups, which will depend, in turn, on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year group. Such applications will be placed on a waiting list in date order of receipt until the number of available places in the relevant year group has been established by the Principal.

Before accepting the offer of a place in the school the parents and their daughter are strongly advised to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ascertain whether there is a place available in the particular subject classes required by their daughter. The fact that there may be a space in a year group would not automatically mean that there is a place available in a particular subject class at the level required by the student. This is because class size is limited in certain subjects. For this reason parents and their daughter are strongly recommended to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ensure that a transfer to the school would be in the best interests of their daughter given the curricular provision, subject choices/levels and facilities available at the time.

#### **Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant to a year group other than First Year or during the school year:**

The parents must confirm their acceptance in writing of an offer of a place within two weeks of the date of the offer of a place.

In accepting an offer of admission from Loreto Secondary School Bray, the parents must indicate—

(i) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) whether or not they have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, they must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

Parents 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.

#### **Circumstances in which offers of a place in a year group other than First Year or during the school year may not be made or may be withdrawn:**

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Loreto Secondary School Bray 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 within two weeks of the date of the offer of a place;
- (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;
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out above;
- (v) 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. 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; or
- (vi) the application is made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year **before** the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year.

#### **Oversubscription to the year group other than First Year:**

In the event of there being more applications to the year group other than First Year than places available, a waiting list of students, whose application for admission to the particular year group has been refused, will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list will be in the order of priority assigned to the students' application after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy (see Section 5 above). The date of receipt of a properly completed Application Form will determine the position on this waiting list within each of the criteria. In the unlikely event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories set out in Section 5 above, then the position on the waiting list (for places in a year group other than First year) will be determined by a lottery process overseen by the Principal and Deputy Principal.

Offers of any subsequent places in the year group other than First Year that become available during the school year 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.

#### **Sharing of Data with other schools:**

Applicants should note that the provisions of Section 11 above relating to the sharing of data with other schools will apply in all cases where an application is made to a year group other than First Year or during the school year.

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

The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School Bray 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.

## 16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend Loreto Secondary School Bray without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will be then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

## 17. Reviews/appeals

### Review of decisions by the Board of Management:

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

**Note:** Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

## Right of appeal:

Under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.