



Mercy Secondary School, Dublin Road, Tuam Co Galway.

Roll number: 63160D.

School Patron: CEIST CLG.

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, CEIST, on 18th September 2020 It is published on the school's website (www.mercytuam.com) and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it. The Admissions Notice is attached to this document. The Application form is at the following address: <https://forms.gle/cAFCKbxMmYSp2Sbg8>

The relevant dates and timelines for name 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 Scoil Bhríde

Scoil Bhríde is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust).

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde 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.

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

1. The full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects,
2. A living relationship with God and with other people,

3. A philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus,
4. The formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith

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.

Catholic education is therefore a lifelong process of human growth and development, which has been at the heart of the Church's mission since Jesus Christ urged his disciples to 'go teach all nations'. The person of Christ is the core of Catholic education.

Scoil Bhríde draws on the richness of the religious and cultural heritage of the past, interpreted and lived out for students living in today's world. The charism of Catherine McAuley, founder of the Mercy Order who began this school is of very significant importance in the life of the school.

As a CEIST school, Scoil Bhríde values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities. Our school seeks to build a quality learning community that welcomes, and bears witness to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the CEIST Charter. These are encapsulated in the core values which are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our schools.

- ***Promoting Spiritual and Human Development***
- ***Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning***
- ***Showing Respect for Every Person***
- ***Creating Community***
- ***Being Just and Responsible***

Scoil Bhríde is inspired by the words of Jesus Christ to his disciples, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). Because of this, Scoil Bhríde provides a rich, holistic education in the Catholic tradition where engagement with and development of the whole person; the intellectual, moral, religious, physical, spiritual and psychological are at the core of our practice.

Education has as its goal the formation of a human person who is free, rational and mature in relationships. Scoil Bhríde offers educational opportunities which promote excellence so that students can respond responsibly and creatively to their own lives, the lives of others and to the earth, which is our common home.

In Scoil Bhríde the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God is acknowledged and affirmed. As we are a Catholic school, Scoil Bhríde is an inclusive community, ideally built on love and formed by the interaction and collaboration of its various components: students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the Board of Management. Scoil Bhríde is an outward looking school. We are connected to our local parishes and Diocese and other local organisations which enrich the life of our school. Our school draws on the rich resources of the local community and, in turn, contributes to the life of the local community.

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is central to our curriculum. Alongside Religious Education, the school supports the formation in faith of our students through many school-based experiences of

prayer and ritual. All students' spiritual growth is further enhanced through such areas as sport, language, nature, art, poetry and music.

Our Mission Statement

Scoil Bhríde Secondary School is a voluntary Catholic School, which values and maintains a Christian ethos of mercy, justice, and equality for all. Its aim is the pursuit of excellence in a centre of holistic learning. We actively nurture a caring environment in which respect for all is the hallmark.

Aims

Our aim is the pursuit of excellence in a centre of holistic learning by developing the academic, spiritual, physical and social abilities of each student, in a Christian atmosphere. To achieve this:

1. We will continue to promote equality of opportunity for all using a student-centered approach.
2. We will continue to enhance a climate, which values individuals and nurtures learning through a disciplined environment.
3. Pastoral care will continue to be an integral part of school life.
4. We will avail of our personnel and resources to provide new and to develop existing courses that meet the educational needs as laid down by the Board of Management
5. Parental involvement is welcomed through our Parents Association and through Parent/Teacher meetings
6. We will encourage responsible student participation through the Student Council and other school based clubs and groups.
7. We support co-operation between the Parents and Student Councils.
8. We endeavor to link the above aims with our school motto "Serviamus in Veritate"

3.Admission Statement

Scoil Bhríde will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

1. The gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
2. The civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
3. The family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
4. The sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
5. The religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
6. The disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
7. The ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
8. The Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
9. 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.

Scoil Bhríde is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

4. Category of Special Educational Needs catered for in the Special Class

Scoil Bhríde has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category 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.

Category of Special Educational Needs catered for in the Special Class: Multiple Disability: This means that students who have a diagnosis of two or more additional needs are eligible to apply for enrolment in our class.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a. The school is oversubscribed (please see point 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
 1. Scoil Bhríde 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.
 2. Scoil Bhríde is a Catholic School under the trusteeship of CEIST and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.
 3. The special class attached to Scoil Bhríde provides an education exclusively for students with Multiple Disabilities 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

- a. 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. Siblings of current pupils and/or past pupils
 2. Students from primary schools in the local catchment area
 3. Lottery

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: The school will apply a lottery with an independent observer to decide on the which candidate should be offered the 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:

- 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:
 - a. admission to the special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned
- 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. The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,
 - a. *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.*

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Scoil Bhríde will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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 Scoil Bhríde, 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 Scoil Bhríde 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.

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 Scoil Bhríde 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 Scoil Bhríde 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 and The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

Our Admission Policy and Application Form to enrol during the school year or to enrol in a year group other than first year can be accessed on the school website or requested by contacting or visiting the school office.

Applicants' parents or guardians or applicants over 18 years age must complete the Application Form giving all the details requested.

Incomplete Forms will not be accepted or stamped and will be returned to the Applicant

All properly completed application forms will be dated and retained by the school.

Parents/ guardians will be notified in writing of the status of the application within 21 days of receipt of the completed application.

In the event of the Year Group being oversubscribed the school will apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications received on or before (*Date to be indicated*)

1. Siblings of current pupils and/or past pupils
2. Students from primary schools in the local catchment area
3. Lottery

Applications received after the above date will be ranked and offered a place in order of date and time received after all applications received on or before (*the above date*) have been processed

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.

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.

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

The Board of Scoil Bhríde 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-

1. An application for admission of a student to the school, or
2. The admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding opting out of Religious Instruction

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend Scoil Bhríde 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. 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.

Final Ratification by the Board of Management on September 18th 2020

Proposed: Sr Mary Corr

Seconded: Deirdre Connaughton

Gearoid Leen, Secretary to the Board of Management