

Admission Policy of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford.

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School Patron: Loreto Trust Board

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/guardians of students attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 19 August 2020. It was subsequently amended by the school patron on 10 November 2020 to be in compliance with Department of Education and Skills circular letter 0069/2020. It is published on the school's website – www.loretowexford.com - and will be made available in hardcopy on request.

The relevant dates and timelines for the Loreto Secondary School, Wexford admission process are set out in the school's 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.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Loreto Secondary School, Wexford is an all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the 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 truth, freedom, justice, sincerity 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 (note 1 below), and enshrined in our

documents on Loreto Education, 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, Wexford 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.

Note 1: 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.

The school's Mission Statement reflects the core values of the founder, Mary Ward:

“Truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy – as relevant today in Loreto, Wexford as for Mary Ward in 1609.”

The educational objectives of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford are:

- To offer a Catholic education that strives to liberate, empower and motivate students to use their individual gifts with confidence, creativity and generosity in a spirit of loving and responsible service.
- To promote the moral, spiritual, academic, social and personal development of students in consultation with their parent/guardians.
- To cherish all students equally regardless of ability, gender, creed, class or ethnic background.
- To encourage a pursuit of excellence appropriate to each student so that she may develop to the full her particular gifts.
- To offer a broad holistic curriculum to enable students to reach their full potential and to develop a love of learning.

- To give every opportunity to students to develop powers of critical reflection thereby building independence of mind as a means towards responsible citizenship.
- To nurture the aesthetic sense through the creative arts and an appreciation of heritage and culture.

This school is one that seeks to promote healthy lifestyles for all in a safe, supportive and non-threatening environment. Through its policies, procedures, activities and structures the school aims to create an environment in which:

- People feel valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- There is respect, tolerance and fairness
- People in difficulty are supported
- There is open and honest communication
- Effort is recognised
- Difference and diversity are valued
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted
- Initiative and creativity are stressed

These aims are fulfilled in the daily transactions between management, staff, students and the wider school community.

3. Admission Statement

Loreto Secondary School, Wexford 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

*Loreto Secondary School, Wexford is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school. The school will be as supportive as possible of any student who wishes to change her gender in the course of her time in the school.

**Loreto Secondary School, Wexford 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.

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.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- a parent/guardian 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
- 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.

5. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the Principal will 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:

Category	Description
1	Sisters of students who are attending or who have previously attended Loreto Secondary School, Wexford.
2	Daughters of current and former non-casual staff, teaching and non-teaching, employed directly/engaged by the BOM.
3	Daughters of past students of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford up to a limit of 37 places, being 25% of total 1 st year annual enrolment, in compliance with the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.
4	Remaining applicants.

In the event of over-subscription, the Principal, having allocated places to those entitled to same in categories 1 and 2, will then conduct two lotteries (if required) to, firstly, fill the 37 places allocated to daughters of past students (category 3) and then, secondly, to reach the point where 150 places, being the combined total from the four categories, have been allocated. Once the stated places have been allocated in categories 3 and 4, the lottery draws will continue to determine each applicant's place on the relevant waiting list/s.

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:

1. the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
2. a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
3. the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents/guardians;
4. a requirement that a student, or his or her parent/guardians, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
5. 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 the selection criteria based on:
 - a. sisters of a student attending or having attended the school
 - b. parents/guardians of a student having attended the school
 - c. daughters of current and former non-casual staff, teaching and non-teaching, employed directly/engaged by the BOM.

In relation to (b) above – parent/guardians of a student having attended the school, Loreto Secondary School, Wexford may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces i.e. 37, as set out in the school's annual admission notice, in compliance with the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

6. the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school, this being 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.

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Loreto Secondary School, Wexford will be based on the following:

- The 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 the annual admission notice for receiving applications

Please see section 15 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 16 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the 1st year intake group.

Selection criteria that are not included in the school's admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in the 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 the school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including details of the student's place on the relevant waiting list/s 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, Wexford, the applicant must indicate—

(i) whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools for his/her daughter. If s/he has accepted such an offer, s/he must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

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

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, Wexford 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/guardian 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 the previous section.

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 certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

12. Waiting lists in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, waiting lists of students whose applications for admission to Loreto Secondary School, Wexford 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 lists of Loreto Secondary School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting lists, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the lists.

13. 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.

If the school is already oversubscribed it will not be possible to offer a place in respect of a late applicant.

14. Procedures for admission of students to years two to six and during the school year

1. Any request to transfer a student (girls only) from another 2nd level school into years two to six in Loreto, Wexford must be made on a standard application form available from the School Secretary or Receptionist. It may also be downloaded from the school's website – www.loreto-wexford.com
2. Completed application forms will be accepted in the month of May for the following September. A decision on whether or not to enrol will be made within 21 days after 31 May. This decision will be conveyed in writing to the person/s making the application.
3. The decision of the Board of Management on such an application will be based on the school's class size policy as set out below:

Home Economics	20 students maximum
Art, Science subjects, Drama, Music	24 students maximum
All other subjects (except Choir)	30 students maximum

4. Where the demand exceeds any available places in a particular year group, the Principal will apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below:

Category	Description
1	Sisters of students who are attending or who have previously attended Loreto Secondary School, Wexford.
2	Daughters of current and former non-casual staff, teaching and non-teaching, employed directly/engaged by the BOM.
3	Daughters of past students of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford.
4	Remaining applicants.
In the event of over-subscription, the Principal, having allocated places to those entitled to same in categories 1, 2 and 3 will then conduct a single lottery to fill any remaining places in a given year group and to determine each remaining applicant's place on the school's waiting list which will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.	

5. Confirmation of a place is conditional on the receipt by the school, within 14 days of the date of offer of a place, of the signed acceptance by a parent/guardian of the school's Code of Behaviour. Following confirmation of the acceptance of place, parents/guardians are invited to a meeting designed to facilitate them in sharing any relevant information likely to assist the school in acting in the best interests of the student.
6. Applications for admission into years two to six that are received in the course of the school year will be considered should a vacancy exist in the year group in question and by reference to any waiting list that might already exist for that particular year group.

7. 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.

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

The school's Board of Management, 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.

16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

A parent/guardian of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend Loreto Secondary School, Wexford without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent/guardian or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school within the limited staffing resources made available by the Department of Education and Skills.

Any arrangements that may be put in place will not result in a reduction in the school day of such a student.

17. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

- a. Where an applicant has been placed on a waiting list 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.
- b. 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.
- c. A request for a review must be made in writing to the Secretary, Board of Management, Loreto Secondary School, Wexford within 21 calendar days of the date stated on the letter refusing enrolment.
- d. The parent/guardian of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the Board of Management to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.
- e. 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.

Right of appeal

- a. Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent/guardian 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.

- b. 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. The applicant must first request a review of this decision by the Board of Management as outlined above.
- c. 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.
- d. 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, above)
- e. 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)
- f. 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.
- g. 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.