

**Mercy Convent Primary School,**

**Naas**

**ADMISSIONS**

**AND**

**PARTICIPATION**

**POLICY**

# *Mercy Convent Primary School*

## **Admissions and Participation Policy 2020/2021**

<i>School:</i>	Mercy Convent Primary School,
<i>Address:</i>	Sallins Road, Naas, Co. Kildare.
<i>Telephone:</i>	045-876410
<i>Staff:</i>	29 teachers, including Deputy Principal and Principal. 22 Mainstream Class Teachers 6 Special Education Teachers 1 Part-Time Secretary 1 Part-Time Personal Assistant 1 Caretaker, 2 Special Needs Assistants (for the current school year 2019-2020).

*Classification:* Mercy Convent Primary School caters for classes from junior infants to *sixth* class. It is a full-stream school with boys and girls in junior and senior infants, and single sex - girls only from first class to sixth class.

Mercy Convent Primary School is a Catholic school, under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin (the “Patron”).

This enrolment policy for Mercy Convent Primary School has been devised in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 (as amended), the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Equal Status legislation, directives of the Patron and following consultation with the school community.

### **Mission Statement**

Mercy Convent Primary School is a Roman Catholic School which aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It provides Religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith. It endeavours to continue in the rich tradition of the Mercy Order, as it was formerly a Mercy school.

The school embraces the philosophy of inclusiveness and endeavours to reflect that philosophy in the enrolment of pupils with a disability or other special educational needs. The school also embraces the principle of equality of access and participation in the school. Mercy Convent Primary School welcomes children from all faith backgrounds.

Mercy Convent Primary School endeavours to foster respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life that exist in our community.

Within the context and parameters of the relevant legislation outlined above, Department of Education and Skills regulations, the rights of the Patron and the funding and resources available, Mercy Convent Primary School will support and foster those aforementioned principles and philosophies.

While recognising the right of Parents/Guardians (“Parents”) to enrol their child in a school of their choice, the Board of Management of Mercy Convent Primary School reserves the right to determine maximum school and class size, in order to ensure the safety and educational needs of pupils.

### **School Curriculum**

The school curriculum is as prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills which may be amended from time to time.

### **Categories of enrolment**

This policy sets out the criteria used to determine applications for enrolment in the following categories:

1. Applications for enrolment of children into junior infants in September 2020.
2. All other applications for enrolment.

This policy sets out the priority order, which will apply, where the number of applications for enrolment exceeds the number of available places. In doing so, the Board of Management has regard to available resources; directions from the Patron; circulars from the Department of Education and Skills; school and class sizes etc.

### **The following is a list of factors taken into consideration by the Board of Management in devising its enrolment policy:**

- i. Overall school capacity: The Department of Education and Skills considers Mercy Convent Primary School to be a full stream school, currently with 22 mainstream classes.
- ii. Space: Availability of space in classrooms and play areas.
- iii. Health and Safety requirements. Average class sizes will not exceed a pupil teacher ratio of **twenty-eight to one**. In addition, enrolment is confined to a total of 4 junior infant classes, i.e. the total junior infant intake will not exceed (*4 times 28*).
- iv. Availability of grants and resources: The school depends on grants and resources from the Department of Education and Skills and operates in accordance with regulations and circular letters issued from time to time by the Department of Education and Skills.
- v. Educational needs: The educational needs of existing pupils will be taken into account.
- vi. Special educational/behavioural needs: The presence of pupils with special educational and/or behavioural needs will be considered.
- vii. Department of Education and Skills /Patron requirements from time to time.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR JUNIOR INFANTS

Parents who wish to make an application for enrolment of their child into junior infants must do so by post or by hand during the period from **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019**. The strict deadline for receipt of fully completed enrolment applications is **3pm on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019**. ('The closing date'). The Board of Management is not obliged to consider applications received before or after the dates outlined above.

It should be noted that the submission of an application form(s) does not confer a right to enrolment.

The following conditions must be met for application for enrolment into junior infants in September 2020:

The official application form must be used. This is available in hard copy from the school, and on the school's website [www.mercyconventprimarynaas.com](http://www.mercyconventprimarynaas.com).

A fully completed enrolment application form, duly signed and dated, must be returned during the dates specified and in any case not later than the closing date.

An applicant must have reached his/her fourth birthday before the 1st September 2020

The following documentation must accompany a fully completed, signed & dated application form, which must be submitted no later than the closing date in order for the application to be considered a "complete application":

- i. Copy of the applicant's birth certificate
- ii. Proof of address in the form of a utility bill or bank statement in the name of one of the Parents, which must be dated no later than three months prior to the closing date. It is essential that a copy of such a utility bill be enclosed with the application form as if not, even if the applicant is living within the parish, the application will not receive any priority on the "living within the parish of Naas" ground.

Applicants in respect of whom a complete application has been made, who are not successful in securing a place in junior infants, will be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will expire at 5 pm on the 30th September 2020.

The Board of Management is not obliged to place applications, which are late on a waiting list. In the event that the Board of Management considers late applications, such applications will be placed last on the waiting list in the order of date received. For the avoidance of doubt, complete applications that are received on time will receive priority over late applications. Incomplete applications cannot be considered until all required information is received. If such information is received after the closing date, the application will be treated as a late application.

Submitting inaccurate information on an application form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void ab initio. Where a place has been offered, this will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn, the place being reallocated and the applicant being placed last on the waiting list. Where the applicant was placed on a waiting list, it will result in the applicant being placed last on the waiting list.

□ Written notification of the decision regarding the application for enrolment will be issued to Parents on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019. Acceptances must be returned by **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019**.

□ Parents of applicants who have been offered a place must inform the school in writing of the acceptance of the place, by completing and returning an enrolment acceptance form by Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Failure to do so will result in the place being forfeited and the place being reallocated.

If the application for enrolment is successful and the place has been accepted as outlined above, the child shall be enrolled as per his/her name on his/her official birth certificate.

#### **CRITERIA USED TO PRIORITISE APPLICANTS FOR ENROLMENT INTO JUNIOR INFANTS IN SEPTEMBER 2020**

The criteria for enrolment, in priority order 1 – 4 below, are used to determine enrolment, where the number of applications received outnumber the number of places available in junior infants.

If the number of applicants, in any one of the categories, outnumber the places available, applicants' ages will determine the outcome i.e. places will be offered beginning with the oldest eligible applicant in the oversubscribed category and proceeding in descending order of age from oldest to youngest, until all available places have been filled.

It is to be noted that reference to siblings is to be taken as including reference to step siblings.

#### **Criteria**

1. Siblings of pupils already enrolled in the school.
2. Children of staff currently working in the school.
3. Children living within the parish of Naas
4. All other applicants.

#### **ENROLMENT APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ENROLMENT INTO ANY CLASS OTHER THAN FOR ENROLMENT INTO JUNIOR INFANTS IN SEPTEMBER 2020.**

*As a general principle and in so far as practicable having regard to the school's Admissions and Participation Policy, children will be enrolled on application provided that there is a space available. In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class or standard exceeding the number of places available preceding or during the school year (due to Board of Management being unable to provide suitable accommodation, or recruit the required teaching staff), the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolment.*

- a) *Siblings – Brothers and sisters (including step siblings, resident at the same address) of children already enrolled – priority to the oldest*
- b) *Children of current school staff – priority to the oldest*
- c) *Priority to the oldest children living within the Parish*
- d) *Priority to the oldest children who live outside the Parish and who do not have a Catholic school in their Parish*

*Children will receive priority in the order of a, b, c, d.*

*In the event of being unable to enrol children from categories a-d in a given class at the beginning of a year, or mid-year, such children will receive priority (in order of a,b,c,d,) for the subsequent school year over the other children on the class waiting list.*

In the case of applications for enrolment in the 2020/2021 school year other than for enrolment into Junior Infants in September 2020, the following criteria apply:

#### Criteria

- (i) That a place exists in an age appropriate class. The availability of a place, in a class will be determined in the overall context taking all relevant circumstances into account, including, but not limited to the following,
  - Overall number of pupils which the school can accommodate at the time the application is made
  - Needs of the existing pupils
  - Presence of pupils with special educational needs.
  - Physical space
  - Current optimum arrangements for teaching and learning purposes are maintained for existing pupils
  - Maximum class size will not exceed **28:1**
- (ii) In addition, the capacity of Mercy Convent Primary School will achieve the level prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills and/or the Patron i.e. a school currently with 22 mainstream classes.
- (iii) Other than as provided for above, no application can be made to enrol or transfer a pupil into junior infants from another school prior to 1 October 2020. In addition, such an application can be only be made after 30th September 2020. Such an application will only be considered where a vacancy exists, the applicant was already enrolled in another primary school, s/he is/was in attendance at that primary school for not less than 20 school days, s/he was 4 years of age before 1 September 2020 and the other requirements of this enrolment policy have been fulfilled.

The following application procedure applies:

- The official application form must be fully completed. This is available in hard copy on request from the school and on the school's website [www.mercyconventprimarynaas.com](http://www.mercyconventprimarynaas.com) . The form must be dated and signed by the Parents.
- All requested documentation must be furnished i.e. a copy of the applicant's birth certificate, relevant reports etc.
- Applications which are incomplete, not signed, not dated and/or do not include the required documentation will not be considered. A place will not be offered and/or the applicant will not be placed on a waiting list. The Parents will be notified of this.
- A separate form must be completed for each child, if applicable.
- Where the number of applications outnumber the available places, any available places arising will be allocated on a "first come first served basis," based on the date the fully completed application form was received provided in the first instance that the applicant meets all the enrolment requirements.
- Submitting inaccurate information on an application form or in accompanying documentation will render the application void ab-initio and where a place has been offered will result in the offer of the place being withdrawn, the place being reallocated and the applicant being placed last on the waiting list. In the case of placement on a waiting list, the applicant will be placed last on the list.
- Written notification of the decision regarding the application will be issued to Parents within 21 days of receipt of the fully completed, signed and dated application form.
- Parents of applicants who have been offered a place must inform the school in writing of the acceptance of the place, by completing and returning to the school an enrolment acceptance form within seven calendar days. Failure to do so will result in the place being forfeited and reallocated.
- If the application for enrolment is successful and the place has been accepted as outlined above, the pupil shall be enrolled as per his/her name on his/her official birth certificate.
- Applicants in respect of whom a fully completed application form and in respect of whom all relevant documentation has been submitted, who are not successful in securing a place will be placed on a waiting list. This place on the waiting list expires within one year of the date of receipt of the fully completed application form.

***Automatic Transfer into first class in St. Corban's Boys National School Naas under a local arrangement with Mercy Convent Primary School.***

- 1. Male pupils who have completed senior infants in Mercy Convent Primary School Naas will continue to have an automatic right to transfer from Mercy Convent Primary School Naas into first class in St. Corban's BNS.*
- 2. The Patron guarantees that on completion of senior infants, male pupils in Mercy Convent Primary School will automatically transfer to St. Corban's National School and this local arrangement will continue to apply without any limitation in time.*
- 3. Application forms for admission to first class in St. Corban's are available through St. Corban's Boys National School. The completed application form must be returned to St. Corban's Boys National School by 3pm on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019.*

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Pupils with special needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills and/or National Council for Special Education (NCSE). In the event that an applicant has special educational needs, a copy of the applicant's medical/psychological reports and/or a professional assessment of the applicant's needs must be submitted, so that an application for resources can be made.

## **REFUSAL TO ENROL**

Mercy Convent Primary School reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any applicant who does not comply with the terms of this enrolment policy.

In exceptional circumstances Mercy Convent Primary School reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any applicant where: -

1. The applicant has special needs such that, even with additional resources being made available from the Department of Education and Skills / National Council for Special Education, Mercy Convent Primary School cannot meet such needs and/or provide the applicant with an appropriate education.
2. The applicant poses unacceptable risk(s) to themselves, other pupils, staff and/or school property.

Mercy Convent Primary School will refuse to enrol an applicant who is seeking to be enrolled in the school where that applicant was previously a pupil in Mercy Convent Primary School and was either expelled from the school and/or transferred from the school to another school while on suspension and/or undergoing a process under the school's Code of Behaviour.

Mercy Convent Primary School will refuse to enrol a child who is transferring from another school if that child has either been expelled from or is currently suspended from that school and is undergoing a process under that school's code of behaviour. Reports detailing the



child's behaviour record from the school from which the pupil is transferring is a requirement prior to the consideration of the application.

Parents of applicants refused enrolment, will be advised of their right to appeal the Board of Management's decision as outlined below.

### **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

#### **Appeal to the Board of Management:**

Where a parent is informed that there is no place for their child in the school, they may appeal this refusal to enrol within 21 days to the Board of Management. The Board of Management will consider this appeal and will respond in the first instance within two weeks from the receipt of the appeal. The Board of Management may seek additional information for further assessment in which case the appeal time may be extended up to a total of five weeks.

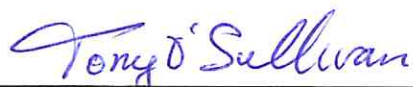
#### **Appeal to the Department of Education:**

Parents who are unhappy with an enrolment decision may appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the Department of Education and Skills on the official Section 29 Appeal Application Form, which can be downloaded from [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie). This appeal must be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills within 42 calendar days of receipt of the decision of the Board of Management to refuse enrolment.

### **RATIFICATION AND REVIEW**

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 9th October 2019. It was approved by the Patron on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

This Enrolment Policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board of Management e.g. in the event of change to the pupil teacher ratio and/or legislative/ Department of Education and Skills /Patron/other requirements etc.



Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019

Chairperson, Board of Management.