Admission Policy of Our Lady of Mercy Primary School

School Address: Pearse Road, Sligo F91YY06 Phone number: 071 9171364

Website: www.mercypssligo.ie
Roll number: 19985F

Principal: Olivia Flannery
School Patron: Most Reverend Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin

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 formulating 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 12th January 2026. 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 Our Lady of Mercy Primary School'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 available to any parent/guardian who calls into the school to request it. Enquiries regarding enrolment may also be made by phone or email.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Our Lady of Mercy Primary School is a Catholic, co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Elphin.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

(a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
(b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
(c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
(d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith, and which school provides religious education for the pupils 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.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy Primary School 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.

Mission Statement

Our Lady of Mercy Primary School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Elphin. We are rooted in the ethos and tradition of our founders, the Sisters of Mercy. We foster an atmosphere where difference is respected and we welcome children of all religions and none.

We are a community for learning where students, parents, and staff work together to nurture the academic and life skills which will enable our students to achieve their maximum potential. This takes place in a happy school environment. We realise this by providing a challenging and diversified curriculum in a stimulating, inclusive and caring setting.

Characteristic Spirit of our School

In Our Lady of Mercy Primary School religious instruction, in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church, is part of the education given to children who belong to that church and to other Christian children whose parents request it.

Pupils are prepared for receiving the sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation in accordance with arrangements in the diocese.

Prayer is a feature of the school day. Religious icons e.g. statues, pictures, sacred space etc. are on display to promote our Catholic ethos. Catholic ceremonies both in school and in the church are celebrated throughout the year.

The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.

The Principal and staff aim at maintaining high professional standards and creating a safe, nurturing and happy school environment with healthy self-esteem and a focus on wellbeing.

A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn, by example and teaching, to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and different nationalities. Self- discipline is encouraged and a realisation of the importance of personal choice.

The school is committed to a holistic approach to education and fosters a quality learning environment for pupils and staff.

We encourage excellence in learning and reward effort.

We recognise the uniqueness of each child in our care and we strive to develop his/her full potential. To this end we work in partnership with parents and the wider community.

We strive to ensure that parents find the school an open, welcoming, inclusive place with an open door policy.

We encourage our pupils towards a deep respect and lasting interest in the Irish language and culture, being mindful of the diversity in language.

The ancillary staff are highly esteemed and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education.

3. Admission Statement

Our Lady of Mercy Primary School 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.

Primary schools receiving applications from applicants of a minority religion Our Lady of Mercy Primary School is a Catholic school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes Catholic religious values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of a student who has applied for a place in the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Schools with special education classes
Our Lady of Mercy Primary School is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provide an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and sanctioned by the NCSE and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school.

Our Lady of Mercy Primary School will co-operate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of it's functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.
Our Lady of Mercy Primary School will comply with any direction served on the Board or the Patron under section 37A and 67 (4)(b).

Our Lady of Mercy Primary School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established 3 classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder as diagnosed by DSM V.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 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

School with special education classes
The special classes attached to Our Lady of Mercy Primary School provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder 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.

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for autism when the following is provided in support of such an application:

1. Professional report(s) outlining: Diagnosis of special educational needs (e.g. Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)

2. AND
   A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports

3. AND
   Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same
4. AND
   A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for (insert category of special educational need e.g. autism)

Please note: Children already attending our school, who have met all of the above criteria, may get priority for places that become available.

6. 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:

(A)	Children living within the area of St. Anne's, Sligo with brothers and sisters (including step siblings, resident at the same address). (See attached map)
(B)	Children living within the area of St. Anne's, Sligo . (See attached map)
(C)	Children of current staff.
(D)	Children living outside the area of St. Anne's, Sligo with brothers and sisters (including step siblings, resident at the same address). (See attached map)
(E)	Children living outside the parish boundary-priority to nearest (as per Google maps) and oldest.
(F)	The Board of Management may have to operate a minimum cut off age.

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:

1. Older children will have precedence.
2. Preference will be given to the child who's address is closest Geographically.

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; except in the case of our 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) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; except in the case of siblings/ step siblings of a student currently attending the school.

(g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.

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 Our Lady of Mercy Primary School 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 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 Our Lady of Mercy Primary School, 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.

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 Our Lady of Mercy Primary School 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.

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 certain information 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 Our Lady of Mercy Primary School 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 Our Lady of Mercy Primary 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.
Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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 no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

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 other than the school's intake group are as follows:

Parents/Guardians of new pupils from Senior Infants to sixth class request a school transfer by calling into the school. They will be advised of the Admissions Policy and directed to it on our website. They will be given an enrolment form. When the enrolment form has been completed, it will be processed and a decision will be made which will be relayed to parents.

A pupil who leaves the school and who is removed from POD, and who subsequently wishes to return to the school, must reapply in writing to the Board of Management.

Schools from which pupils are transferring will be contacted regarding the child's transfer via POD.

Pupils are admitted into age appropriate classes.

The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:

A. Multi-grade classes.
B. Available classroom space.
C. DES class size directives.
D. Our status as a DEIS 1 school - 17 pupils in JI to 2nd , 21 3rd to 6th

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:

Pupils may transfer to the school if they have moved into the area subject to our Admissions Policy and available space. Other applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Parents/Guardians of these pupils request a school transfer by calling into the school. They will be advised of the Admissions Policy and directed to it on our website. They will be given an enrolment form. When the enrolment form has been completed, it will be processed and a decision will be made which will be relayed to parents. Schools from which pupils are transferring will be contacted regarding the child's transfer via POD.

Pupils seeking to enrol in Junior Infants after September of the current school year, must have turned four years of age by September 30th of that current school year.

Pupils are admitted into age appropriate classes.

Pupil transfer from other local schools is discouraged.

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

The board of Our Lady of Mercy Primary School 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.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents/guardians have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A request should be made to the school. A guidance document outlining the school's arrangement will be given to each parent/guardian following the student's commencement in the school.

18.Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent/guardian of 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 and within three weeks of the decision to refuse admission.

The timeline 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.

Right of appeal

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

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. 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.

This policy will be reviewed as necessary in light of experience. This policy was approved by the school's Board of Management on _____

Signed: Fr. Pat Lombard _____

(Chairperson, Board of Management.