

Admissions Policy



St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School
Killester, Dublin 5

Date approved by the Patron:	25th June 2026
Date ratified by Board of Management:	25th May 2026
Last Updated:	

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. 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 St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned. This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

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

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School is a Catholic is a voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust.

The characteristic spirit of the school is based on the vision and values of the Le Chéile Charter which draws on the charisms and traditions of the different congregations that comprise the Le Chéile Schools Trust.

St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School, Killester was established in 1967 by the Holy Faith Order and seeks to promote the core values of Holy Faith education as outlined in the Le Chéile Charter.

The philosophy and ethos of St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School are founded on the vision of Margaret Aylward, foundress of the Congregation of the Holy Faith Order. Holy Faith schools aim to create a community through which is formed an integrated and reliable people who deeply experience God, who have a sense of responsibility to Church and society, who are critically aware of injustice and the needs around them and who are eager to build a better world.

Our school is committed to creating a place of inclusivity, equality and openness, where people can live with and be taught by one another, however diverse our experiences might be. It does not discriminate on religious grounds and is open to students from diverse backgrounds. It

offers educational opportunities which promote excellence so that students can respond responsibly to their own lives, the lives of others and the earth, which is our home.

As a Catholic school, St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School has a special commitment to the development of the spiritual dimension of students' lives. To this end, faith formation and the Religious Education (RE) programme play a key role. Students follow the Department of Education and Skills programme in Religious Education which is suitable for students of all faith and those of no faith.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary 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

The general objectives of all Le Chéile schools include: -

Welcome recognises the unique dignity and worth of each person.

Wisdom is the pursuit of a greater understanding and appreciation of the world.

Witness comes from the expression of Gospel values, in everyday life, and recognises that every person is made in the image and likeness of God.

Mission Statement

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School is a Catholic school where we strive to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive academic environment. Our vision is to nurture the talents, abilities, and confidence of all our students, celebrating diversity and welcoming students from all cultures and backgrounds. In collaboration with parents and guardians, we aim to help our students reach their full potential and take their place in society as responsible, mature young adults.

Our Core Values:

- Respect for SELF
- Respect for OTHERS
- Respect for the ENVIRONMENT

3 Admission Statement

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary 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.

St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its 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.

St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

St. Mary's as a co-educational school;

St. Mary's as a Roman Catholic school;

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes Roman Catholic religious values and does not discriminate where it

- admits a student of the Roman Catholic faith in preference to others.

- refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School welcomes students of all abilities, including those with Special Educational Needs and will endeavour to offer equal educational opportunities to all.

5. Admission of Students

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School shall admit boys and girls seeking admission who have reached the age of 12 years on the 1st of January of the school year and as a rule have completed a full course of primary education, 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

As already described in section 3 above:

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School as a co-educational school;

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School as a Roman Catholic school;

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes Roman Catholic religious values and does not discriminate where it

- admits a student of the Roman Catholic faith in preference to others.
- refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary 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 students and past pupils

2. Students from schools in the Howth Deanery who have applied through the Howth Deanery system

3. In a limited number of cases (25% of available places) the children and grandchildren of past pupils

4. Applicants who are not accepted in categories 1-3

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:

A lottery system will be used to allocate place(s) to applicants. Applicants will be notified in writing if they have been successful.

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the waiting list and will be notified in writing as to their place on the waiting list.

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;
- (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 meetings 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 sisters of students or past or present and in a limited number of cases (25% of available spaces) the children and grandchildren of past pupils.
- (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 St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary 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 16 below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary 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. 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 St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary 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.
- (v) 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.

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 St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary 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 St. Mary's Holy Faith 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. (See 6. Oversubscription)

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. (See section 6. Oversubscription)

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 are as follows:

- Copies of the school's Admission Policy and the Application Form for Admission for the school year are available as follows: –

To download at: St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School Killester holyfaith.ie On request: By emailing admin@hfk.ie or writing to: St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School Secondary School, Brookwood Meadow, Killester, Dublin 5

- Applications will be considered in relation to St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School selection criteria (see section 3)
- Students and their parents may be invited to meet with the Deputy Principal
- The reason(s) for the proposed transfer will be discussed with the parents/guardians and the student, as appropriate.
- A School Transfer Form will be given to parents/guardians to be filled by the student's current school and to be returned to the office (see Section 12 re sharing of data)
- Before accepting the offer of a place in the school the parents and their child should understand that although there may be a space in a year group this would not automatically mean that there is a place available in a particular subject class at the level required by the student. This is because class size is limited in certain subjects.
- Successful applicants will be informed in writing.

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

The Board of Management of St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School or any persons acting on its behalf shall not, except in accordance with section 64 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

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

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

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

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

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

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

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

Right of appeal

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

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

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed. Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant must request a review of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management).

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

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

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

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School