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St. Mel's College, Longford

Admissions Policy

September 2026

School Roll No: 63750B

Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise



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 on the 16th September 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 St. Mel's College 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. Mel's College is a Catholic voluntary, post-primary school with a Catholic ethos for male students only under the trusteeship of the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. Catholic ethos in the context of a Catholic Voluntary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church which aims at promoting:

- The full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the student including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects
- A living relationship with God and with other people
- A philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death, resurrection of Jesus
- The formation of the students in the Catholic faith.

St. Mel's College encourages each student to strive to achieve his full potential academically, physically, morally, socially and spiritually. Our school motto, Aemula Virtus, to strive for excellence, is at the core of our school.

Mission Statement:
St. Mel's is a Catholic Diocesan College under a Board of Management, whose spiritual, academic, athletic and social programme is intended to enable male students to live a full, active, working Christian life. Our value system is based on mutual respect and courtesy along with honesty and integrity in our dealings with

one another. We promote an environment where each male student is valued for himself, supported in developing his full potential, learns self-discipline and personal responsibility and where misconduct can be reasonably seen as unacceptable.

St. Mel's College is committed to excellence. The school provides a caring and disciplined environment in which all students are challenged to reach their academic and personal potential.

We show concern for the disadvantaged, and we make every effort to ensure that the uniqueness and dignity of each person is respected, and responded to, especially through the student support system in the college.

We realise that we must cater for the changing needs of today's world, especially in the light of our Deis status, and to that end, we review our various programmes.

The College Board of Management, parents, staff and students, working together as a school community within the resources available, aim to provide an education in the best possible environment for all its students. The principal, while not a member, acts as a secretary to the Board. The Board of St. Mel's College supports and subscribes to the principles of inclusiveness, accountability, partnership, transparency, respect for diversity, parental choice and equality and is committed to the successful implementation of relevant education legislation, in particular the Education Act(1998), The Education Welfare Act(2000), the Equal Status Act(2000) and Admissions Act (2018). The school is granted aid by the Department of Education, which includes teacher resources.

3.Admission Statement

St. Mel's College 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. Mel’s College will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating 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. Mel’s College will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

St. Mel’s College is an all-boys school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a girl applying for admission to this school.

St. Mel’s College is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of the Roman Catholic faith in preference to others.

St. Mel’s College 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 faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Mel’s College is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister of Education, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories 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.

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

St. Mel’s College, with the approval of the Minister of Education, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism.

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

St. Mel's College provides education exclusively for boys and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

St. Mel's College is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic faith where it is provided for that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

Professional report(s) outlining:

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

AND

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

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

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 autism.

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:
If applications for admission exceed the number specified in the annual admissions policy notice the board of management will allocate places in accordance with the following procedure:

1. a) Brothers of present / past students of St. Mel's College
2. b) Male students from the catchment area
3. c) Sons of staff members
4. d) Sons of past students

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), arrangements will apply as below.

Where the school is oversubscribed under any of the above criteria, the allocation of the remaining places will be determined by lottery system.
The lottery will be supervised by an independent chairperson and will include two witnesses from the Board of Management or the Parents' Association. Students not offered a place will be put on a waiting list determined by the lottery system.

In addition if the special class is oversubscribed priority may be given to students already enrolled in the school with the required diagnosis as outlined in Section 4 and the supporting evidence as outlined in Section 5.

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 to the school; other than the fee for Transition Year;

c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to admission to a 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, 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;

1. (other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.
2. In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

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. Mel's College 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 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 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.

Students with Additional Educational Needs

Applicants with additional educational needs, when enrolled, should note that the College will, with parental permission, access the student's records from their primary school/Individual Programme well in advance of entry to the school to facilitate planning and apply to the National Educational Psychological Service and/or the Department of Education for the resources to support the student.

9.Notifying Applicants of Decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing/ through the online system 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 St. Mel's College, 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 St. Mel's College 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 students in relation to:

(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 name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consideration Act 2005).

This data may be further shared with the Department of Education for further processing to facilitate the efficient admission of students. This is in accordance with the Minister for Education's statutory function to ensure that there is made available to each person resident in the State a level and quality of education appropriate to meeting the needs and abilities of that person and to plan and co-ordinate the provision of education in recognised schools, having regard to the resources available.

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. Mel's College 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. Mel's College 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 applications 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 applications 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 classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

St. Mel's College will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to St. Mel's College.

The Principal on behalf of the Board of Management will decide on an application for admission to any other year other than First Year by applying the following criteria:

1. There must be an available place after the general admissions criteria have been applied.
2. It is in agreement with St. Mel's College admissions policy.
3. The transfer must be in the best interest of the student.
4. The transfer must be in the best interest of St. Mel's College and the other students in St. Mel's College.
5. The transfer must be of educational benefit to the student.

6. Information from the student's former school concerning attendance, educational progress, subject choices, term reports.
7. Health and Safety considerations.
8. St. Mel's College application form must be completed.
9. Information in relation to the student's disciplinary record.
10. The Code of Behaviour must be signed and returned.

In arriving at a decision the Principal will consult with the student's parents/ guardians, his former school(s) and the educational welfare officer. The Principal or Deputy Principal will invite Parents/Guardians of the student to attend a meeting to discuss the academic support to assist the student achieve his full potential in St. Mel's College.

As soon as is practicable, but no later than 21 days, the Principal shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/ guardians in writing thereof. (Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 19 (3))

There are 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:

St. Mel's College will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to St. Mel's College, after the commencement of the school year. The Principal on behalf of the Board of Management will decide on an application for admission to any other year other than First year by applying the following criteria:

1. The must be an available place after the general admissions criteria have been applied.
2. It is in agreement with St. Mel's College Admissions Policy.
3. Admission to St. Mel's College after the commencement of the school year must be in the best interest of the student.
4. Admission to St. Mel's College after the commencement of the school year must be in the best interest of St. Mel's College and the other students of St. Mel's College.
5. Admission to St. Mel's College after the commencement of school must be of educational benefit to the student.
6. St. Mel's College Application Form must be completed.
7. The Code of Behaviour must be signed and returned.

In arriving at a decision the Principal will consult with the student's parents/ guardians, his former school(s) and the educational welfare officer. The Principal or Deputy Principal will invite Parents/Guardians of the student to attend a meeting to discuss the academic support to assist the student achieve his full potential in St. Mel's College. As soon as is practicable, but no later than 21 days, the Principal shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/ guardians in writing thereof. (Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 19 (3))

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

The Board of St. Mel's College 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 or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has 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:

Parents of students and students (over 18) who wish to opt out of RE class should make a written request to the principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent or student to discuss their options. Throughout this process the constitutional right of the parent or student (over 18 years) will be respected by the school.

The 1998 Education Act states that schools are required to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students (Section 9(d)). At St. Mel's College the allocated time on the timetable for Religious Education responds to this. Students who opt out of R.E Class are required to use this time to study material relating to their own religious tradition or belief, for example sacred text. Students of no religious faith, who opt out of R.E class, are required to study relevant literature or philosophical texts. St. Mel's College places great importance on the religious and spiritual formation of all its students. Each student has their own personal journey which will be encouraged and respected. Students who opt out of R.E class will not be offered extra tuition or study periods.

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.

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.

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.

Admissions Policy

The Board of Management reviewed this policy in September 2026 and ratified it on the 16th September 2026.

Signed: _____ Date: 16/09/26

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: 16/09/26

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management