



## **Admission Policy**

### **Our Lady's Girls' National School**

**Ballinteer Avenue**

**Dublin 16**

**Roll Number :** 19396 J

**School Website:** [www.ourladysgns.ie](http://www.ourladysgns.ie)

**School Patron:** Archbishop Dermot Farrell

**Parish:** Saint John the Evangelist,  
Ballinteer.

## **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 17/01/2022. 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's G.N.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 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**

Our Lady's G.N.S. is a Catholic all girls primary school with one mixed special class for children with autism, with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin Diocese.

"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:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, a living relationship with God and with other people
- including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
- 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's G.N.S. 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.

This policy is linked to other relevant policies within the school and in particular our Code of Discipline.

### **Mission Statement**

Our aim at Our Lady's Girls' National School is to provide a well-ordered, safe, caring, happy and secure environment for learning. We strive to maintain a curriculum which helps our pupils to realise their full potential, prepares them for the experience of second level education and develops all aspects of their personality.

We aim to maintain a sense of belonging among our school community by fostering mutual trust and respect and true partnership between all those, both individuals and groups, involved in the welfare of our pupils. As a Catholic school we provide religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promote the formation of our pupils in the Catholic faith.

We encourage the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of the curriculum and in the personal development of the children.

We welcome and encourage parents as partners in our school and we aim to foster a sense of community between management, teachers, parents and pupils.

### **Our School Ethos**

Our school is a Catholic School with a Catholic Ethos. Non Catholic pupils attending our school are respectfully given the freedom to adhere to their own beliefs and practices. We are an inclusive school and we welcome children of all abilities.

Our aim is to provide a learning environment which is free from discrimination, threats, bullying and or harassment for all staff and pupils where each child is valued as a person and is provided with a variety of opportunities enabling her to live as a child and developing all aspects of the person; spiritual, emotional, moral, social, intellectual, cultural and physical.

We seek to develop in the child a positive self-image and a respectful caring attitude towards others.

We encourage each child to take an active part in their own development on all levels so that they can:

- enjoy being at school and contribute to making school life a good experience for all.
- be ready and able to benefit from second level education.
- go on to take her place in society as a happy fulfilled and responsible adult.

Since teaching/learning is a collaborative effort we involve parents, teachers, pupils and the wider community.

We endeavour to challenge the gifted child and to give special support, care and attention to children with any level of additional needs.

The school endeavours to provide an ordered environment, which fosters discipline and respect while promoting good behaviour and mannerly and positive interactions. Acceptance of a place in the school is deemed to be an acceptance of the Code of Behaviour. In order to be validly enrolled as a pupil in Our Lady's Girls' School, parent(s) must confirm that they accept the Code of Behaviour

### **3 Admission Statement**

Our Lady's G.N.S. will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- the gender of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the civil status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the family status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the sexual orientation of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the religion of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the disability of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- the race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- if the student or the applicant in respect of the student is part of the Traveller community, or
- if 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.

Our Lady's G.N.S. 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 Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Our Lady's G.N.S. is an all-girls mainstream school catering for girls from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class. The school does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to the mainstream school. Our special class for pupils with ASD is open to boys and girls.

#### ***Schools with Special Education Classes***

Our Lady's Girls' NS is a school which has established a special class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with the category of ASD as 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**

Our Lady's Girls' School embraces the philosophy of inclusiveness and endeavours to reflect that philosophy in the admission of pupils with disabilities or other special educational needs. The school welcomes applications from children with special educational needs. Such applications will be processed in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

Pupils with special educational needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

In order to assist the school in establishing the educational and physical needs of a successful applicant, relevant to his/her ability or special needs, and to profile the support services required the school requests that parent(s) of the pupils accepted for enrolment; (i)

- Inform the school of any additional needs as early as possible and  
(ii) Ensure that copies of relevant professional reports are provided so that provision can be made for that applicant's welfare and educational progress.
- Where a report is not available and in the event that an applicant is accepted for enrolment, a request will be made that the successful applicant be assessed immediately. Following receipt of the report, the Board of Management will assess how the school can meet the needs as specified therein.
- Where the Board of Management deems that further resources are required, it will request the DES and or NCSE and or HSE to provide resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the medical and or psychological report(s).
- The Principal may, in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) or the DES Inspector, meet with the parent(s) of the child to discuss the child's needs. This meeting is not a condition of enrolment.

#### **Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the Special Class**

Our Lady's GNS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. (ASD)

***– The following criteria will apply when making an application for this class:***

### ***Criteria for Enrolment of Children in the Special Class for children with Autism***

- Each child must have a full current Psychological & Cognitive Assessment, which must specify a diagnosis of 'Autism' i.e. **DSMIV** or **ICD10** and a recommendation for a special class placement in a mainstream school from such a professional report.
- The parents/guardians must fill in and return Our Lady's G.N.S. School Application Form for placement in the A.S.D Class. All relevant reports and assessments must accompany the application form, including O.T. and/or Speech and Language report, if relevant.
- A child with behavioural difficulties should be in receipt of ongoing support from an ASD team
- Attendance at a pre-school, preferably a pre-school for children with autism is desirable.
- The Board of Management states that, as per DES instruction, the school will accommodate a maximum of one special class for children with Autism, covering the age range of the primary school.
- The Department of Education & Skills states that the ratio for each class is a maximum six pupils to one teacher and two SNAs. There must be more than three pupils to access the second SNA. In exceptional circumstance a third SNA may be granted by the SENO.
- The Admissions Policy states that the parents/guardians (and the prospective candidates for the class if required) may be invited to meet the principal, the class teacher and any other relevant parties before the child starts school. An Induction meeting of new parents will be held prior to commencement in the school, as with all pupils.
- The class is not designed for children with multiple disabilities.
- Prior to enrolment, all potential applicants may be visited by a member of staff to observe the student in their existing placement and to provide feedback to the Board of Management

The class will be co-educational and will cater for children of primary school age only – i.e. four years to thirteen years.

- In accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act a parent/guardian must confirm compliance with the school's Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment if this confirmation is not received prior to the pupil attending the school. The Board also reserves the right to continue to suspend or expel a child under 'Health & Safety' regulations and in conjunction with the school 'Code of Behaviour' as per the National Education Welfare document if the need should arise.

- A placement breakdown can sometimes occur. All placements are subject to review at the request of the parents and/ or the school. The review will include input from all agencies involved (through a multi-disciplinary team meeting), the parents/guardians and the school. Following the review, a recommendation may be made that the child be enrolled in a school that can better meet his/her needs. First preference will be given to pupils attending Our Lady's Girls' National School, where a transfer will take place from mainstream to special classes if criteria have been satisfied. Integration will be determined based on the individual needs of the child, and through discussion with the parents/guardians and the relevant class/support teacher. Following agreement, phased integration will take place

### ***Admission of Pupils to the A.S.D. Class***

Decisions in relation to enrolment of pupils are made by the Board of Management in accordance with the school policy. The Board of Management will, where possible notify parents in writing of its decision within 21 days of the closing date for receipt of applications. The number of spaces in the ASD class for children with autism may not be finalised until later in the school year and parents will be notified accordingly.

If the number of children **who meet the enrolment criteria** exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will be considered:

1. Children who are in mainstream classes in Our Lady's Girls' National School
2. Siblings of current pupils of the school (eldest will have priority in ranking)
3. Children living within the Ballinteer Parish area (eldest will have priority in ranking)
4. Children of current school staff (eldest will have priority in ranking)
5. Children living outside the Ballinteer Parish area (eldest will have priority in ranking)
6. Children not in the above named categories

Application Forms for the ASD Class are valid once Criteria for Enrolment in the ASD Class have been fulfilled. (See Criteria for Enrolment).

If available, places will be allocated, once an assessment has been made by the Board of Management. Offers of a placement in the ASD Class are subject to approval of the N.C.S.E Special Educational Needs Organiser and also ratification by the school Board of Management.

On acceptance of a placement the parent/guardian must recognise and acknowledge that the Board of Management may terminate a placement should the Board, in consultation with the multi-disciplinary team, deem the placement unsuccessful.

### **5 Admission of Students (Mainstream Classes)**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- 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

Our Lady's G.N.S. provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit a student who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

Our Lady's G.N.S. is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

*Note for Parents: the inclusion of the above wording was mandated by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.*

### **6 Oversubscription to Mainstream Classes**

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:

1. Siblings and stepsiblings of children already enrolled in the school and/or children resident in the parish of Balinteer (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)
2. Siblings and stepsiblings of children already enrolled in Our Lady's Boys' N.S.
3. Children of staff (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking).
4. Children residing outside the parish (the eldest child will also have priority).

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a final place, the following arrangement will apply.

In the event that two or more students are tied for a place, the oldest student will be given priority. If two students have the same date of birth, then a lottery will be held.

The lottery will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner by the Principal, a member of the Board of Management, and an officer of the Parent Association.

### **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) 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 parent's;
- (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 other than as set out in Section 6 Oversubscription to Mainstream Classes.
- (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's G.N.S. 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's G.N.S., 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 are 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's G.N.S. 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 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's G.N.S. 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's G.N.S. 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 a 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

Where there is more than one class (per stream) pupils will, where possible, be allocated to classes according to their date of birth.

### **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:

Applications for enrolment during the school year will be considered subject to school policy, available space and the provision of information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress.

Such applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis but will normally only be considered for admission on the first day of each new term unless the applicant is newly resident in the area.

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:

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's G.N.S. 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's G.N.S. 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.

Junior Infants, with the exception of students transferring from another school, will be considered on a case by case basis. However, Junior Infants normally start school at the start of Term 1.

### **16 Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees**

The board of Our Lady's G.N.S. 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 have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

Prior to religious occasions parents/guardians will be contacted to ascertain if they do or do not wish their child to attend the religious events arising from an existing list of pupils in this regard. Alternative arrangements will be offered for these pupils.

### ***18. Reviews/appeals***

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parents/guardians 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.

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 parents/guardians 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. (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.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Our Lady's Girls' National School on 24/9/24.

Signed:  Chairperson, Board of Management

The contents of this policy were sent to Archbishop's House Education Office, acting on behalf of the Patron, for approval.

Approval was granted on 17/01/2022.