



LORETO SECONDARY SCHOOL,

Coleville Road,

Clonmel,

Co. Tipperary

Admissions Policy

Roll Number: 65330M

School Patrons: Loreto Education Trust

Ratified by
The Board of Management
on 26th June 2020

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 Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents/guardians of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on the date noted on the front cover. 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 Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel'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

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust.

Loreto schools seek to provide an education that affirms the innate dignity of every human being created in God's image and fosters the full and harmonious development of each student, encompassing the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects in an environment of justice, freedom, sincerity, truth and joy.

The creation of a dynamic school community where every student is equally cherished and has a real sense of belonging is a priority in a Loreto school which draws its inspiration from Gospel values and the rich heritage passed on to us from Mary Ward and Teresa Ball¹, and enshrined in our documents on Loreto Education, including *Kolkata Educational Guidelines for Loreto Schools*, *Continuing the Journey: A Loreto Education* and *A Mary Ward Schools' Compass*.

Students are encouraged to be reflective and discerning in the spirit of our Loreto and Ignatian tradition and continue to grow with integrity in right relationship with God, with other people and the environment.

Our philosophy of holistic education places the person of the student at the centre of the educational enterprise which nurtures the student's capacity to "seek truth ... to love what is good ... to strive for excellence" (Teresa Ball) and joyfully engage with life-long self-directed learning in all its dimensions.

¹ The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in 1609 by Mary Ward and Teresa Ball brought this tradition which she named Loreto to Ireland in 1821.

In so doing, we are committed to preparing students to take their place in society as generous, confident, perceptive, well-informed, articulate and compassionate people ready to contribute to the common good.

Loreto schools welcome students of all faiths and of none while maintaining a Catholic ethos. Inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue together with a spirit of inclusivity and the celebration of diversity are fostered in the school.

In harmony with our characteristic spirit and recognising that care of faith and education are fundamental to the Loreto tradition, Religious Education is central to our curriculum and the faith formation of Catholic students is supported by the school in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church. Each student's spiritual life is expressed and deepened through prayer, ritual in the cycle of the liturgical year, reflection on the profound link between faith and justice and creative engagement with the dialogue of faith and life communicated in nature, in science and in the arts.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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.

Our school's **Mission Statement** says: *Our school is a caring, Christian community in which students have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment.*

3. Admission Statement

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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.

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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 Roman Catholic denomination in preference to others.

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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 Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where:

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 5 below for further details)
- b) a parent/guardian 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

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel is a Roman Catholic denominational school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

5. 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:

5.1 Sisters of present students.

5.2 Sisters of past students.

5.3 Daughters of eligible staff of the school. Staff members will be deemed to be eligible if they are in the employment of the Board of Management on a non-casual basis, during normal school hours, for at least six months, and are reasonably expected to be still employed by the Board of Management at the time their daughter commences in Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel.

- 5.4 **(a)** Students whose Mothers and Grandmothers attended Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel
(b) Grand-nieces or nieces of Loreto Sisters

Note: the school may only apply this criterion to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

When 5.4(a) is considered if this is not at 25% only then will 5.4(b) be considered (up to the maximum of 25%).

- 5.5 Girls currently (at the time of application) enrolled in Sixth Class in a primary school within the catchment area of Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel (see **Section 5 Note 1** below for catchment area).

(a) In the event that the number of applications from girls attending schools within the **catchment area** exceeds the number of remaining available places, these places will be allocated on the basis of a lottery having due regard to a 2:1 ratio of *Group One* and *Group Two Categories*. This lottery, arranged by the Principal, will be supervised by two external observers, external to the school staff.

Note: when using 2:1 ratio if the total available places is a fraction of a number, anything greater than or equal to 0.5 shall be rounded up and anything less than 0.5 shall be rounded down).

(b) In the event that there are girls from the catchment area who are not allocated a place above, they will be placed on a numbered waiting list in the order in which they are drawn in a new lottery, but the 2:1 ratio will not be used at this point.

Parents/Guardians shall be informed of their daughter's place on this waiting list.

- 5.6 Students from non-traditional feeder schools subject to availability of places,

- 5.7 Any application deemed to be in accordance with this policy but received subsequent to the closing date and before the commencement of the academic year will be added to end of the waiting list and/or offered a place subject to availability.

- 5.8 The Board of Management is aware, based on previous years' offers and acceptances that not all offers of a place will be accepted. Consequently, and with a view to minimising the period that applicants will be on a waiting list, offers in excess of the number of available places (as determined by the BOM as set out above) may be issued until such time as the number of available places is filled.

In all cases, when a lottery is being conducted, applications received on behalf of twins, triplets, or sisters from the same family unit will be treated as one applicant. This will neither increase nor reduce the chances of any applicant being offered a place.

Section 5 Note 1**Catchment Area – Group one and Group Two**

For the purposes of the Admissions Policy the Catchment Area is:

Group One <i>(in alphabetical order)</i>	Gaelscoil, Clonmel
	Powerstown Primary School
	Presentation Primary School, Clonmel
	Scoil Mhuire na nAingeal, Clonmel
	St. Mary's Parochial School, Clonmel
	St. Oliver's Primary School, Clonmel

Group Two <i>(in alphabetical order)</i>	Ardfinnan Primary School
	Ballymacarbry Primary School, County Waterford
	Clerihan Primary School
	Grange Primary School
	Kilcash Primary School
	Killurney Primary School
	Kilsheelan Primary School
	Lisronagh Primary School
	Newcastle Primary School
	Rathkeevin Primary School

6. 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/guardians;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents/guardians, 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, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criterion 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.

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criterion 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.

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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 12* below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and *section 13* 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.

8. 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).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel, 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.

9. 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 Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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/guardian 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 8* above.

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.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

10. 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).

11. 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 Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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 Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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.

12. 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.

13. Procedures for admission of students to other years other than First Year and/or during the school year

Where parents/guardians wish to make an application for their daughter to a year group other than First Year or during the school year, they should in the first instance fill in an Application Form. An offer of a place can only be made if there is space in the year group in question. A decision on whether a place can be offered will be conveyed to the parents within 21 days of the initial application. Applications made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year will be refused until the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend, in turn, on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year group. Such applications will be placed on a waiting list until the number of available places in the relevant year group has been established by the Principal.

Before accepting the offer of a place in the school the parents/guardians and their daughter are strongly advised to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ascertain whether there is a place available in the particular subject classes required by their daughter. The fact that there may be a space in a year group 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. For this reason, parents/guardians and their daughter are strongly recommended to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ensure that a transfer to the school would be in the best interests of their daughter given the curricular provision, subject choices/levels and facilities available at the time.

Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant to a year group other than First Year or during the school year:

The parents/guardians must confirm their acceptance in writing of an offer of a place within two weeks of the date of the offer of a place.

In accepting an offer of admission from Loreto Secondary School Clonmel, the parents/guardians must indicate:

- (i) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and
- (ii) whether or not they have applied for and are awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, they must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

Parents/Guardians should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by Loreto, Clonmel.

Circumstances in which offers of a place in a year group other than First Year or during the school year may not be made or may be withdrawn:

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Loreto Secondary School Clonmel 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 within two weeks of the date of the offer of a place;
- (iii) the parent/guardian 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;
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out above;
- (v) the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education. 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; or
- (vi) the application is made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year **before** the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year.

Oversubscription to the year group other than First Year:

In the event of there being more applications to the year group other than First Year than places available, a waiting list of students, whose application for admission to the particular year group has been refused, will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list will be 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 Section 5 above. Note that students who join the school in years other than First Year at the time of application are not enrolled in a primary school, so Section 5.5 is not relevant.

Offers of any subsequent places in the year group other than First Year that become available during the school year 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.

Sharing of Data with other schools:

Applicants should note that the provisions of Section 10 above relating to the sharing of data with other schools will apply in all cases where an application is made to a year group other than First Year or during the school year.

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

The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel 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.

15. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The Religious Education curriculum in the school is in accordance with the Religious Education Policy and is available to all parents/guardians.

A parent/guardian of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend Loreto Secondary School, Clonmel without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will be then be arranged with the parent/guardian or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students.

16. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the Board of Management 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 of Management 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/guardian 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.