Admission Policy

St Maries of the Isle Primary School

Bishop St., Cork

Roll Number: 14000C
Patron: Bishop Fintan Gavin, Diocese of Cork and Ross

SECTION 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Education (Provision in Respect of Children with Special Educational Needs) Act 2022. In drafting this policy, the Board of Management (BoM) 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 25/09/2020. It was reviewed in May 2023 to include changes required to the schools Admissions Statement following the commencement of the Education (Provision in Respect of Children with Special Educational Needs) Act 2022. In September 2026 the policy was reviewed in line with requirements of circular 39/2025 which requires schools to update the eligibility criteria relating to Special Class admission and the inclusion of NCSE letter eligibility criteria. 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. Maries of the Isle Primary 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.

School Details

Address: St. Maries of the Isle Primary School, Bishop St., Cork. T12 DW99

Telephone: (021) 4963994

Email: info@stmariesps.ie

Board of Management

St. Maries of the Isle Primary School has a Board of Management (BoM). The BoM occupies an important position in the governance of the school. The membership of the BoM is comprised of the following: two nominees of the Patron, two parents of pupils enrolled in the

school (one being a mother, the other being a father), the principal teacher of the school, one other teacher on the staff of the school and two members from the wider community.

Range of Classes Taught

There is a full range of classes for boys and girls, from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

The school includes 4 autism classes catering for up to 24 children. Each autism class is staffed by 1 teacher and access to Special Needs Assistants.

The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education (DoE) and it operates within the regulations laid down by the DoE. School policy has regard to the resources and funding available.

Classes start at 8.40 a.m. and finish at 2.20 p.m. Infant classes finish at 1.20 p.m.

SECTION 2: CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES

School Profile

St. Maries of the Isle Primary School is a Catholic co-educational school, under the patronage of the Bishop of the Diocese of Cork and Ross, the Most Rev Bishop Gavin and the trusteeship of the Sisters of Mercy.

Mercy Philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Education is committed to the holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged and marginalized. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy Education is committed to on-going whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, staff, parents and the wider community.

School Ethos and Mission Statement

St. Maries of the Isle Primary School is a community of pupils, parents, staff and members of the Board of Management, in which all are unique, valued and respected. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and of participation in school life, with respect for diversity of tradition, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society, whilst working within the context of the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Education.

Following the charism of the Mercy Congregation, we aim to:

- *Promote the dignity of all persons*
- *Help each person to develop their full potential*
- *Foster good relationships within the school community*

Context, Resources, School Organisation & Curriculum

The school supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school. The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parent's choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of any applicant or student. The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil – teacher ratios sanctioned by the DoE and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the DoE in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the DoE

St. Maries of the Isle follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education, (Re-developed Primary School Curriculum 2025), which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.

Faith Formation

While nurturing the growth of faith in the child is primarily the right and responsibility of the parents, St. Maries of the Isle supports parents in fulfilling their obligation in this regard through Religious Education, which includes instruction as well as formation.

Children in second class whose parents wish them to receive the sacrament, are prepared for Confession and First Holy Communion. Children in fifth and sixth class whose parents wish them to receive the sacrament, are prepared for Confirmation.

Key Principles

Within the context and parameters of DoE regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act (1998), and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- *Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other specific educational needs*
- *Equality of access and participation in the school regarding ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, traveller status, refugee status, political or religious beliefs, family or social circumstances*
- *Parental choice in relation to enrolment*
- *Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.*

SECTION 3: ADMISSIONS STATEMENT

St. Maries of the Isle Primary School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

(a) the gender of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
(b) the civil status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
(c) the family status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
(d) the sexual orientation of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned

(e) the religion of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
(f) the disability of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
(g) the race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
(h) membership of the Travelling Community
(i) 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. Maries of the Isle Primary School is a school which has classes with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, that provides an education exclusively for students with autism and may therefore refuse to admit to the classes a student who does not have the defined category of needs specified.

St. Maries of the Isle Primary 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 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. Maries of the Isle Primary School 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.

SECTION 4: CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS CATERED FOR IN THE SPECIAL CLASSES

St. Maries of the Isle Primary School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established four classes to provide an education exclusively for students with autism.

SECTION 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
(c) in the case of a student seeking admission to an autism class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational need provided for in these classes

SECTION 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. The criteria will be applied to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

1. Sisters/brothers of the proposed new entrant already in the school/past pupils
2. Children living in the South Parish
3. Children of parents or grandparents who are past pupils of the school
4. If space is still available, class numbers are completed from the Waiting List, which is compiled and ordered according to the date of the original application

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:

- If two children are tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria then the older child will get priority.

SECTION 7: WHAT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED OR TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

(a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—
St. Anne's Day Nursery, Sharman Crawford Street, Cork.

(b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;

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

- admission to one of the school's classes for autistic children insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and/or

(d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;

(e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;

(f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than, (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents of a student having attended the school. In relation to (2) parents 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.

SECTION 8: DECISION ON APPLICATIONS

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Maries of the Isle Primary School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

  (Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Only the selection criteria included in our school admission policy will be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

SECTION 9: NOTIFYING APPLICANTS OF DECISIONS

Applicants will be informed via email 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 via email 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).

Section 10: ACCEPTANCE OF AN OFFER OF A PLACE BY AN APPLICANT

In accepting an offer of admission from St. Maries of the Isle, parents 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
(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.

SECTION 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. Maries of the Isle Primary School where—

(i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
(ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
(iii) the parent of a student, (when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000), fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
(iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 10 above.

SECTION 12: SHARING OF DATA WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—

(i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
(ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
(iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

(i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
(ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
(iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
(iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

SECTION 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. Maries of the Isle Primary School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Maries of the Isle 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.

SECTION 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.

Section 15: PROCEDURES FOR ADMISSIONS 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 will be considered in line with the criteria set out in this policy and subject to capacity
- Priority will always be given to siblings of existing students or students in the catchment area

The procedures for transfer during the school year are as outlined above. Consideration would also be given to the disruption of school at the time of transfer and the decision may be taken, that the time of the transfer is not suitable for the school and the other students in the school.

SECTION 16: DECLARATION IN RELATION TO THE NON-CHARGING OF FEES

The BoM of St. Maries of the Isle Primary School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

(a) An application for admission of a student to the school, or
(b) The admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school

SECTION 17: ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING STUDENTS NOT ATTENDING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Our school is of a Catholic ethos and, in keeping with that ethos, children of all or no other faith are welcome to apply to this school.

We respect the decision of parents to not have their child/children take part in the religious education curriculum, religious ceremonies, school Masses, etc.

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

1. Where there are two classes at the same class level, one teacher will teach the students from both classes religious instruction and the other teacher will teach the students who are not receiving religious instruction
2. The class that is not receiving religious instruction will be taught a variety of subjects for the duration of the religious lesson
3. These lessons will not disadvantage the children receiving religious instruction

4. Where there is only one class at a particular level the child/children will remain in the classroom during religious instruction

SECTION 18: REVIEWS/APPEALS

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student, may request the BoM 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 BoM 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 BoM 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 BoM 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 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.

SECTION 19: ENROLMENT TO AUTISM CLASSES

St Maries of the Isle's Board of Management provides 4 classes for autistic children in accordance with the Department of Education guidelines and support structures. It is committed to providing the highest quality of education for the children concerned.

The pupil/teacher ratio is 6:1 with Special Needs Assistant support in line with DoE guidelines.

The number of admissions depends on the number of places available, that may vary from year to year. We do not operate a "first come first served" system.

Establishment of the Special Class for Autism Enrolment Committee

The Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for enrolling students in our special classes for autism.

The BoM has established an Enrolment Committee. The members of this committee are:

- Principal
- SEN Coordinator
- Autism class Coordinator
- BOM representative

The role of the committee is to advise the BoM on matters relating to the admission of students to our special classes for autism.

Criteria for Admission

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

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.

Parents/guardians must notify the NCSE by the deadline specified annually (currently October 1st of the year preceding admission) in order to obtain the NCSE confirmation letter.

Application Form

Parents/guardians who wish to enrol children in the autism class are required to complete an application form within the timeframe outlined in the annual Admissions Notice attached to this policy.

Requested Information

If a place is available, the criteria for selection outlined in section 6 above will be applied:

- Pupil's name, age and address
- Birth Certificate
- Parents'/guardians' names, address, contact telephone number and email
- Contact names, telephone numbers in case of emergency
- Doctor/G.P.'s name, telephone number
- Details of any medical conditions/medication that the school should be aware of
- Up to date Psychological Assessment and Speech and Language Report
- Baptismal Certificate in the case of Roman Catholic children
- Basic details in respect of whether a Family Law order exists in relation to the child
- Any other relevant information

Placements in special classes for autism will be reviewed annually in line with Department Circular 0023/2025.

The Integration Policy of St Maries of the Isle outlines the levels of integration for pupils in special classes for autism

Parents/guardians are invited to visit the school.

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to liaise with the DoE regarding suitable transport for the child to and from school. This needs to be arranged in advance of the commencement of the school year

Parents/guardians will be required to participate in development of their child's Student Support Plans twice annually.

Excess of applications for places available: Criteria for Selection

In the event that applications for enrolment exceed the number of places available, priority will be given based on the following criteria:

- Children currently enrolled in mainstream in St Maries of the Isle who meet criteria
- Siblings of current pupils who meet criteria
- Children living in the South Parish and locality
- Siblings of past pupils

Note: The date of registration is not taken into consideration when places are being allocated.

This Admissions Policy was reviewed in September 2026 in line with circular 0039/2025 and Information Note 002. It incorporates the revised eligibility criteria for special class admissions, including the requirement for an NCSE confirmation letter. The policy has been approved by the Patron and ratified by the Board of Management.