

ADMISSIONS POLICY

(Reviewed and updated June 2012 — to be implemented for 2013 Admissions.
This Policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Management)

INTRODUCTION

St. Vincent's is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for boys operating under the Trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). As such it is informed by the ERST Charter which includes the five key elements as guiding principles for this policy:

- **Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values**
- **Promoting partnership in the school community;**
- **Excelling in teaching and learning;**
- **Creating a caring school community;**
- **Inspiring transformational leadership.**

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission aims to provide a quality catholic education for all, in the tradition of Edmund Rice, which promotes leadership, fosters community and respects diversity.

The Board of Management of St Vincent's has drawn up this Admissions Policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998, with special reference to Section 15 (2) (d) of that Act. It is intended that it should clarify for parents/guardians all issues related to enrolment of pupils in the school and to facilitate the enrolment process. This Enrolment Policy has been adapted following consultation with the staff of the school, the Parents Council and approved by the Board of Management. The publication of this policy has been approved for publication by the trustees and is available on the St Vincent's website and through the school office.

The school is managed by a Board of Management, is funded by the Department of Education and Skills and operates within the regulations and guidelines set down by that Department. The school has a very active Parents' Association and a strong Students' Council.

The school aims, with the resources available, to provide the best possible environment in order to cater for the cultural, educational, moral, physical, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions of all students. We show special concern for those experiencing educational inequality and we make every effort to ensure that the uniqueness and dignity of each person is respected, and responded to, especially through the pastoral care system in the school.

Working together as a school community, the Board of Management, parents, staff and students, aim to provide an environment which will allow each student to develop intellectually, physically, morally, socially and spiritually, so as they will be able to fulfill their role in society.

Within the context of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes, the rights of the Trustees/Board of Management as set out in the Education Act 1998 (Section 15 (1), (2)), and the funding and resources available the school supports the following principles:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of students with a disability or other special educational needs
- Equality with respect to maximum access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to choice of school, having regard for the characteristic spirit of the school
- Respect for the diversity of beliefs, languages, traditions and ways of life in society

St. Vincent's Admissions Policy welcomes all students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education. The school aims to provide an integrated and an inclusive education.

Each year the Board of Management may have to decide in advance the number of First Year students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education, having regard to the facilities, personnel, plant and resources. A maximum of 75 boys will be accommodated in First Year for September 2012.

All queries arising from the Admissions Policy may be addressed to Mr. John Horan, Principal/Sec. B.O.M., St. Vincent's, Glasnevin, and Dublin 11.

STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ADMISSION

- Having reached the required age of 12 on the 1st January in the calendar year following the child's entry into First Year
- Having completed Sixth class in Primary School
- Be willing to accept the school ethos
- Be willing with parents/guardians to accept school Code of Discipline.
- Be willing to take an Aptitude Test after a place has been offered and accepted.

CRITERIA FOR THE ALLOCATION OF PLACES

Places will be allocated to new first year student applicants in accordance with the criteria and procedures set out in this Admissions Policy.

- 1. Brothers of students already in the school**
- 2. Brothers of past pupils**
- 3. Sons of past pupils.**
- 4. Son's of members of teaching staff of St. Vincent's**
- 5. Boys from St Vincent's primary school who apply within the established criteria and procedures.**
- 6. Any remaining places will be offered on a randomly selected basis by public lottery (see below).**
- 7. Once all available places have been allocated a waiting list will be established through the public lottery.**

The public lottery will be conducted in the following manner.

All names will be placed in a drum.

Places or position on the waiting list will be determined by the order of draw.

It will take place in the school at a time and date which will be communicated to the persons involved.

An independent arbitrator (e.g. Garda, priest etc) will supervise and sign off the draw for fairness and transparency.

Students who apply after the closing date will be placed on the waiting list in order of the date on which they apply and after any applicant on the list from the lottery draw.

A boy placed on the waiting list is not in anyway guaranteed a place in the school.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with special needs:

The school will use the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs in order that these students are free to participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonable and practicable. While recognising and fully supporting parents' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the availability of resources suitable to the needs of the individual student being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board of Management requires students with special needs to immediately on being offered a place to inform the school of such needs. Failure to do so impedes the school's ability to provide adequately for the student and, in extreme cases, might prevent his admission.

In making provision for special needs students the following information is required. Has the student had access to any of the following resources?

1. Special needs assistant or classroom assistant.
2. Special class.
3. Help, for specific needs, from any resource teacher.
4. Assistance with behavioral modification
5. Psychological assessment. Report to be provided.
6. Any additional resources to help with their special needs.
7. Help in areas including, visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or emotional disturbance.
8. Any resource in relation to travel or mobility etc.

If an expert report is provided, it should include a workable strategy for addressing the needs, allowing for the resources available.

Final confirmation of a place may in exceptional cases be given when the Department of Education and Skills / School confirm in writing that the necessary resources are in place.

N.B. It may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process such applications. Parents are strongly advised to inform the school as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of making application.

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days, after a parent has provided, the relevant information, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents in writing thereof. Education Welfare Act (Section 19, (3)).

Enrolment Procedure

Applications are accepted during September/October as the pupil enters his final year in Primary School.

Application Forms can be had by calling to or telephoning the School Office.

Completed applications for September 2012 must be returned before 4.00p.m. on 7th October 2011. Completed applications received after this date will be placed at the end of the waiting list and will be dealt with on a first come first served basis. A completed application must consist of the following;

1. A completed application form.
2. An original copy of the pupil's birth certificate.
3. Two most recent school reports

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days, after the deadline for completed applications, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents in writing thereof. Education Welfare Act (Section 19, (3)).

In an attempt to cover the cost of areas such as in-house exams, student insurance and extra curricular activities the school seeks parents/guardians to contribute €120 towards the costs. Inability to pay will in no way influence the admission or treatment of any student. (Appendix 1).

All successful applicants must sit an Aptitude Test which normally takes place in February/early March. This test is used to assess achievement levels in order to best facilitate students according to their needs.

A meeting of parents/guardians of incoming students will be held in May 2013. Attendance at this meeting by all parents/guardians is strongly encouraged.

It is a condition of admission that all students must agree in writing to abide by the school Code of Behaviour.

TRANSFER OF A STUDENT FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL.

GENERAL

The school will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to our school.

Application Process

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

The Board of Management will decide whether or not a transfer:

- Is in agreement with School Admission Policy
- Is in the best interest of the student
- Is in the best interest of the school
- Is of educational benefit to the student

All relevant information from the former school must be made available. A consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer may be necessary.

Where a student is considered for a place, the decision will be taken by the Board of Management, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians, his former school, the education welfare officer, whether such a place may be offered, immediately, or whether it would be better to wait until the beginning of the next academic year.

All such applications will be considered on an individual basis, subject to the availability of a place at the time of application. Application Forms are available from the school

office on request. A copy of this Admissions Policy will accompany each application form.

Applicants must meet the school's entry criteria, and furnish a full and honest reason for seeking a placement St. Vincent's

Applicants must complete the application form, giving all of the details required. Incomplete forms will be returned to Parents/Guardians. Parents/Guardians should sign the application form and date it. Parents/Guardians are required to provide an emergency contact phone number.

Applicants will be required to furnish details about their prior second-level education including copies of their last two school reports that set out the actual results of in-house examinations. Where an applicant has attended more than one second-level school they may be required, at the discretion of the Board, to submit reports from each school. Where appropriate applicants may be required to submit copies of the results of any state examinations which they have sat.

Applicants are required to submit a reference from their previous school(s). Applicants may be required to complete a further information form regarding their child's educational progress at a later date. Where the school considers it to be necessary the school may require an applicant to provide a current education psychological assessment report. Failure to complete any of the necessary documentation listed above, within a reasonable timeframe, or to supply any other relevant documentation requested by the school may result in an applicant being refused admission to the school

Decision Making Process: Decisions regarding admissions are a matter for the Board of Management. However, this task is normally delegated to the Principal who decides on such matters in accordance with the school's admission policy.

Admissions for any school year will be considered as soon as possible after the application is received. The school will respond to each application within 21 school days of receiving it but may not be in a position to make a decision on some applications until later in the school year when its current students have given an indication to the school authorities of their intention to return to the school in the forthcoming school academic year. This will certainly be so in the case of applications for senior cycle courses, as the school may not yet have begun to survey its own students about their preferences for senior cycle.

A decision will be made in respect of each application following the timing above and the selection criteria set out below and is subject to the class size limitations imposed by the Board of Management for different subject areas and the capacity of the school to provide the academic subjects sought by the student at an appropriate level i.e. higher/lower.

Enrolment Criteria: Applicants must meet any criteria laid down by the Department of Education and Skills where available e.g. applicants must not have already spent six years

at second-level or apply for a course which would necessarily result in their spending longer than six years at second level.

All students entering the school must supply an original Birth Certificate (returnable to the parent/guardian), a copy of which will be retained on school file/records or other appropriate identification as determined by the school.

The behaviour /disciplinary record of a student in their previous school (s) shall be an important factor. The school reserves the right to refuse to admit a student whose behaviour in their previous school has been deemed unsatisfactory, or is a cause for health and safety concerns or where there has not been a satisfactory level of co-operation between the previous school and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The attendance record of a student in their previous school shall also be an important factor.

The availability of suitable places in any given year group shall be of paramount importance and shall be one of the determining factors of admission.

RIGHT to REFUSE

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student where:-

The student has special needs such that, even with the additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.

In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, school staff or school property.

The applicant or his parents/guardians have furnished incorrect, inaccurate, and incomplete

or misleading information to the school authorities in the course of the application process.

The parents/guardians and/or the applicant refuse to sign the school's code of behaviour.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application for admission in exceptional circumstances.

“The Board of Management of a recognised school shall not refuse to admit as a student in such school a child, in respect of whom an application to be so admitted has been made, except where such refusal is in accordance with the policy of the recognised school concerned published under section 15(2) (d) of the Education Act 1998” (Education (Welfare) Act 2000. (Section 19 (1).)

Should a student's application for admission to the school be refused the parent/guardians have the right to appeal to the Board of Management in writing. The parents/guardians are informed in writing of the Boards decision and the reasons why the student was not

accepted should be clearly stated. The parents/guardians then have the right to appeal to Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998, Section 29 (d).) The right to appeal should be restated and the application form provided. (Circular M48/01). The appeal must be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the Board of Management was notified to the parents/guardians concerned. (Circular, M48/01).

An appeal may be made to **The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, The Appeals Administration Unit, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1**. An appeal should be made in writing on the Application Form supplied. The Appeals Application Form should be completed in full and should state the following: 1. The decision being appealed. 2. The grounds on which the decision is being appealed. 3. The date that the parents/guardians were informed of the decision. 4. All other relevant information. Etc. (Circular M48/01).

N.B. The school must be informed in writing of the decision to appeal. (Education Act, Section 29)

Having regard to the desirability of resolving grievances within the school where possible, the parties to an appeal under Section 29, i.e. the appellant and the school's Board of Management, will be asked to consider the matter in the first instance at local level to see if an accommodation can be reached. As a general rule, appeals will only be considered by an appeals committee under section 29 where the parties are unable to resolve the issue at local level. (Circular M48/01).

The school's Admission Policy is published on the school's website stvincentsd11@scoilnet.ie. and is also available by contacting the school secretary. This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Management

TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAMME

St Vincent's Secondary School offers Transition Year as an optional one-year programme designed to bridge the gap between the Junior and Senior Cycles and to prepare students for adult life. The overall aims of Transition Year, as specified in the Department of Education and Skills guidelines are:

- Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.
- The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with the emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.
- Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.

The number of students that can be accommodated in Transition Year will be decided by the school's Board of Management. Students who have completed the Junior Certificate may apply and preference will be given to students from St Vincent's Secondary School who meet the Transition Year Admissions Criteria. Priority will be given to students who are most likely to benefit from the Transition Year experience and who are likely to have a positive influence on the Transition Year group as a whole.

Admission Procedure

1. For students of St Vincent's Secondary School, application for admission to Transition Year is made via the Senior Cycle Options Form.
2. External applications fill the approved Application form for admission to the school. Applications to Transition Year from these students who meet the criteria will be placed on a waiting list in date order of application.
3. Applicants may be interviewed by the Principal and/or the Deputy Principal and /or the Transition Year coordinator.
4. A closing date will be indicated on the Application Form and late applications may not be considered.
5. Based on the admissions Criteria, a short-list of suitable candidates will be drawn up.

Admissions Criteria:

The following criteria will be considered when assessing a prospective Transition Year student's application.

Indication by the student in his application and/or at interview, of his willingness to participate in all aspects of the Transition Year Programme.

The student's willingness – as a junior student – to abide by the school's Code of Behaviour.

The student's satisfactory attendance record in school.

Evidence that the student has shown a willingness towards study.

The student's contribution to extra-curricular life of the school.

The student's age and/or pastoral needs – based on the recommendations of his Form Teacher and/or Guidance Counsellor and/or other professionals in the school.

Each application will be considered on its own merit. However, where the number of applicants deemed suitable exceeds the number of places available, random selection will apply.

LCA PROGRAMME

Students may apply to follow the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme having completed the Junior Certificate course.

Students will be accepted into this programme following a consideration of their academic performance and disciplinary record to date by the Principal and other members of staff. The number of places available in any year will be decided by the Board of Management. Places will only be offered to students for whom the programme is deemed suitable. If there are more suitable applicants than there are places then a lottery will be used to decide.

DATA PROTECTION

CCTV cameras are in use on the school premises. They cover the grounds and internal school building, including the classrooms. The purpose of these cameras is to support security, safety and discipline within the school.

Class and group photographs will be taken from time to time and may be put on public display or included in school publications.

St. Vincent's Secondary School is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. Personal data provided on the enrolment form will be used for the purposes of student enrolment, registration, administration, child welfare and to fulfill any other legal obligations. While the information provided will generally be treated as confidential to the school, from time to time it may be necessary to exchange personal data on a confidential basis with other bodies including the Department of Social Protection, An Garda Siochana, The Health Service Executive, the National Educational Welfare Board.

Contact details will also be used to notify you of school events or activities. We rely on parents/guardians to provide us with accurate and complete information and to update us in relation to any change in the information provided. Should you wish to update or access your son's personal data, you should write to the school Principal.

Note: This Admission Policy was approved for publication by the school patron, the Edmund Rice Schools Trust, on () and ratified by the Board of Management at their meeting on ().