Admission Policy

Loreto College, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Roll number: 63290Q

School Patron: Loreto Education Trust Board

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 23rd March 2026. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Loreto College admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Loreto College, Mullingar 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 Ball[1], 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.

[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.

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. 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 College, Mullingar 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.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a Christian, caring community of learning, which seeks, in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation, respect and justice, to develop the talents and potential of all members.

Our Mission is achieved through:

An emphasis on the educational development of the whole person;

A recognition and appreciation of the unique individuality of every member of our community;

An orderly, positive environment, which allows quality teaching and learning to take place;

A spirit of collaboration and partnership with parents and the wider community;

Continuing professional development of staff.

3. Admission Statement

Loreto College will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

(a) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(b) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(c) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(d) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(e) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(f) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,

(g) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
(h) 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 College is an all-girls school and it shall not be deemed to be discrimination where we refuse to admit a boy.

Loreto College is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

Loreto College, Mullingar welcomes students with additional educational needs and will use resources, financial and human, provided by the Department of Education and Skills, to make every reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or additional educational needs. Parents, having accepted a place for their daughter, are strongly advised to communicate with the college authorities at the earliest possible opportunity, to assist in the preparations for transition from primary to secondary school.
Loreto College 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 in relation 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.
Loreto College will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b) Education Act1998, as amended.
Loreto College, Mullingar with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills has established a class to provide and education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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.

Loreto College 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 College is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special class attached to Loreto College, Mullingar provides an education exclusively for students with an ASD diagnosis and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

In order to identify the specified category of special educational need of the student, all of the following is required:

- Each applicant must have a definite diagnosis of Autism and their primary diagnosis is Autism according to the DSM IV/V or ICD 10
- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the childs overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports.
- 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.
- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the student is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for Autism.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

The Principal of the College will implement the policy as articulated by the Board of Management and apply the criteria set out below in the allocation of places.

Places will be allocated in the following order:

Category A (1) To sisters of current students and sisters of past pupils (i.e. Past pupils who have completed Junior Cycle and/or Senior Cycle in Loreto College, Mullingar).
Category A (2) To daughters of past pupils (i.e. Past pupils who have completed Junior Cycle and/or Senior Cycle in Loreto College, Mullingar). Maximum intake of 25% of total under Category A(2).
Category A (3) To daughters of non-casual employees, who have worked in this school for at least 3 school years.

Category B To girls attending the following primary schools in Mullingar and surrounding parishes: All Saints N.S., Ballinalack N.S., Ballynacargy N.S., Bellview N.S. (St Colman's), Curraghmore N.S., The Downs N.S., Dysart N.S., Gaelscoil an Chóilín, Gaelscoil an Mhuileann, Gainstown N.S.(St Colmcille's), Kilpatrick N.S., Ballinea (St Kenny's), Loughegar N.S., Mullingar

Educate Together N.S., Multyfarnham N.S., Presentation Senior School, Sonna N.S., Taughmon N.S., St. Mary's Primary School and St. Brigid's Special School.

Category C To girls who are currently resident in Mullingar parish, but not attending the schools to which Category B above refers

Category D To girls from a defined outer area attending primary schools in the following areas: Ballinagore, Castlepollard, Castletown-Geoghegan, Collinstown, Coole, Coralstown, Dalystown, Delvin, Fore, Killucan, Kinnegad, Loughnavalley, Milltown, Milltownpass, Moyvore, Raharney, Rathowen, Rathwire, Rochfortbridge, and Whitehall.

Category E To girls from outside the above areas

Special ASD Class applications

Places will be allocated in the following order:

Category AA-Current Students enrolled in the school
Category A (1) To sisters of current students and sisters of past pupils (i.e. Past pupils who have completed Junior Cycle and/or Senior Cycle in Loreto College, Mullingar).
Category A (2) To daughters of past pupils (i.e. Past pupils who have completed Junior Cycle and/or Senior Cycle in Loreto College, Mullingar). Maximum intake of 25% of total under Category A(2).
Category A (3) To daughters of non-casual employees, who have worked in this school for at least 3 school years.

Category B To girls attending the following primary schools in Mullingar and surrounding parishes: All Saints N.S., Ballinalack N.S., Ballynacargy N.S., Bellview N.S. (St Colman's), Curraghmore N.S., The Downs N.S., Dysart N.S., Gaelscoil an Chóilín, Gaelscoil an Mhuileann, Gainstown N.S.(St Colmcille's), Kilpatrick N.S., Ballinea (St Kenny's), Loughegar N.S., Mullingar Educate Together N.S., Multyfarnham N.S., Presentation Senior School, Sonna N.S., Taughmon N.S., St. Mary's Primary School and St. Brigid's Special School.

Category C To girls who are currently resident in Mullingar parish, but not attending the schools to which Category B above refers

Category D To girls from a defined outer area attending primary schools in the following areas: Ballinagore, Castlepollard, Castletown-Geoghegan, Collinstown, Coole, Coralstown, Dalystown, Delvin, Fore, Killucan, Kinnegad, Loughnavalley, Milltown, Milltownpass, Moyvore, Raharney, Rathowen, Rathwire, Rochfortbridge, and Whitehall.

Category E To girls from outside the above areas

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:

Note:
If demand exceeds capacity i.e. the total number of applicants in a given category is greater than the places available, places will be allocated within that category by means of a random process.

Random Process

In the event of a random process being applied, it will be overseen by the Principal and will be witnessed by a person external to the school e.g. a member of An Garda Síochána and a representative of the Parents' Advisory Council.
The name of each student entitled to participate in the random process will be entered into a randomiser program.
The order in which the names are randomly selected will be recorded on a numbered list and places will be offered in that order until available places are filled.
In the case of one or more sisters applying for admission in the same year, the name of each sister will be entered in the random process separately. If the name of any of the sisters is randomly selected, places will be offered to all the sisters, provided so doing does not exceed the maximum number of available places.

Waiting List
When the available places have been filled, a 'waiting list' will be drawn up, the order of which will be determined by means of the random process applied to remaining students in the above order of categories to which remaining applicants belong. The list shall remain for the year or until such time as no names remain.

Late Applications
Application forms received after the closing date will be added to the waiting list according to date of receipt of application following those already on the list from the random process.

Reviews/Appeals
Please see details (under 18 below) regarding procedures allowing a request to 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.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

(a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,

(b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school; a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; (other than in relation to:

admission to special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned)

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

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

(e) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of her family attending or having previously attended the school, other than those listed in Category A1, Category A2 (to a maximum of 25% of the available places) and Category A3

(f) 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 Loreto College, Mullingar will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- 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 Loreto College, Mullingar, 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.

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 Loreto College, Mullingar 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 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).

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 Loreto College were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of Loreto College is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the specified period 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.

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:

1. Applications will be accepted throughout the school year
2. Applicants will be granted admission if places are available in year groups and subject classes.

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places:

1. If there are places available within a particular year group other than first year, applications will be considered on a first come first served basis.
2. If year groups and/or classes in various subjects are full, students will be offered a place on a waiting list which will remain in place for the academic year

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:

1. Priority will be given to applicants for whom moving into the area necessitates a change of school.
2. Applicants will be granted admission if places are available in year groups and subject classes and provided there is no waiting list.

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

The board of Loreto College 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.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Religious Education is provided in this school in such a way that all students whether of a particular religious affiliation or none can freely and actively participate in the classes.

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

18. Reviews/Appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998. Please note that the request for a review by the board of management must be made within 21 calendar days of the date of the decision to refuse admission.

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 parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education 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.

This policy was approved by Loreto Education Trust Board on 23rd March 2026 and final ratification by the Board of Management of Loreto College, Mullingar took place on September 17th 2026

Chairperson

Marése Bell

17th September 2026