

St. Mary's C.B.S.

**Borris Road
Portlaoise
Co Laois**



Admissions Policy

2018-2019

Revised 22nd August 2017

Introduction

St. Mary's C.B.S. supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation in the school and parental choice in relation to enrolment and application for admission to the school. In this context, the school expresses respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life within the community it serves today. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.

Legal Framework

This Admissions Policy is issued by the Board of Management in accordance with the relevant sections of:

- The Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Equal Status Act 2000
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- Disability Act 2005
- Education Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) 2007
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003: The school is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Acts. Data provided to Edmund Rice Secondary School in respect of an application for admission is subject to the terms and provisions of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003). We rely on Parents/Guardians to provide us with accurate and complete information and to update us in relation to any changes in the information provided. Should you wish to update or access your child's personal data, you should write to the School Principal.

Edmund Rice Secondary School also operates within the regulatory, legal and financial context of:

- The regulations of the Department of Education and Skills
- The rights of trustees as set out in the *Education Act, 1998*
- The Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter
- The Articles of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools
- The regulations of the Department of Education and Skills and the curricular programmes so prescribed which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the *Education Act, 1998*.
- The funding and resources available to the school at any given time. The financial and teaching resources of the school are provided by a combination of grants and teacher allocations from the Department of Education and Skills, voluntary contributions, and occasional fundraising¹. Implementation of the school plan and school policy has due regard to the resources and funding available.

- Within this operating context, Edmund Rice Secondary School is a school that
 - Is inclusive in intake
 - Supports the principle of equality of access to and participation in education
 - Recognises and supports the rights of parents to choose with regard to admission in secondary school
 - Welcomes students with different values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life and seeks to meet their particular needs, subject only to available resources and support for the ethos of the school.

Parent(s)/Guardians seeking the admission of their children to the school are invited to carefully read this Policy.

The Scope of this Admissions Policy

This Admissions policy sets out the process of admission to St Mary's CBS in the following circumstances:

- Students applying for a place in First Year (from the beginning);
- Students from outside the school applying for a place in another year group or programme.
- Students seeking a transfer from other second-level schools;
- Students within the school applying for a place within the school in the Leaving Certificate, Transition Year or Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.
- Students applying to repeat a year of a programme within St Mary's, including repeating the Leaving Certificate.

The Rationale of this Policy

This policy aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to:

- Make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner.
- Make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available to it.
- To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents/guardians and teachers where a student is admitted to the school.

GENERAL INFORMATION

St. Mary's C.B.S. is a Roman Catholic Voluntary Secondary School for boys only under the Trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). It is a grant-aided school situated on the Borris Road in Portlaoise, Co. Laois. The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all its students (cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual) and promotes a Christian philosophy of life. Our policy promotes the integration of boys with special

educational needs, including those with disabilities, if this is in the best interests of the child.

Students are prepared for:

- The Junior Certificate examination.
- The Transition Year Programme, which is optional.
- The Leaving Certificate examination.
- The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, which is optional.

St. Mary's C.B.S. has an active and vibrant Parents' Council and Students' Council. A Board of Management composed of 4 nominees of the trustees, 2 elected nominees of parents of students in the school and 2 elected nominees of the teaching staff governs the school. The Principal acts as Secretary to the Board and is a non-voting member.

Characteristic Spirit

This policy is guided by the ERST Charter. The 5 key elements of the Charter form the guiding principles for this policy. They are:

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

For further information on the Edmund Rice Schools Trust and the ERST Charter, see www.erst.ie.

In an Edmund Rice Secondary School, the ERST Charter values are under-pinned by a philosophy of education that has at its centre the unique dignity of the human person as a child of God. We see the interaction of people from different backgrounds – spiritual, ethnic, language, special needs – as a gift that will enrich the community of the school and promote the growth and learning of all. We value each student and their family. We welcome and are sensitive to each one, seeking to respond to their individual needs through our:

Curriculum: We provide a broad range of academic and practical subject areas, encouraging students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and decision-making.

Pastoral Care: We support and challenge our students to make the most of their time in school, providing programmes of learning support, help with study, personal counselling, where necessary developing and building links with family, working in partnership with parents and guardians.

Faith Development: As a faith school, we have a special commitment to the development of the spiritual dimension of the lives of our students. Faith formation and the Religious Education programme play a key role.

- Students follow our own Religious Education programme, which is suitable for students of all faiths and those of no faith.

- The school celebrates the major Christian feasts and the major feasts of other faiths are acknowledged and celebrated in an appropriate way.
- Every autumn we celebrate a School Mass in our Parish Church which allows our entire school community to join together to reflect prayerfully on the year ahead. The students and RE teachers together prepare the prayers, reflections and select the liturgy. It is a community coming together regardless of individual religions or beliefs.

We hope that the gospel values inherent in the culture of the school will be internalised in the values, attitudes and behaviours of all members of the school community, and will find expression in their respect and care for one another.

St Mary's CBS Portlaoise is open to and welcomes all who share this vision and wish to benefit from it.

Annual Number of Students in St Mary's CBS:

Each year the Board of Management will decide on the number of students to be accepted in 1st year in the following school year. This shall be made before the Application Process for First Year begins.

For September 2018 our first year intake will not be capped. All applications submitted by the due date and time will be accepted.

The Board of Management will also decide the number in each year group.

Transition Year numbers will be decided by 1st March for the following school year.

Current Student Intake According to School Year 2017-18

Year Group	Maximum Intake
1 st	144
2 nd	159
3 rd	173
TY	87
5 th	160
6 th	141
Total	864

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The school relies on Parents/Guardians to provide it with accurate and complete information and to update us in writing in relation to any changes in the information provided. Unless and until otherwise informed in writing, all correspondence in

relation to students will be sent exclusively to the address provided on the application form.

In the case of Parents who have separated, and where the school has been notified of same, the school will arrange for correspondence in relation to their child to be sent to both Parents separately, if requested to do so in writing.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will only be accepted on the official school application form. Application forms are available, on request, from the school office. Applications for first year will only be processed upon receipt of completed Application Form, student's Birth Certificate, 2 signed passport photos and psychological reports (if applicable).

Applications for all other year groups will only be processed upon receipt of completed Application form, Birth Certificate, 2 signed passport photos, reference, the most recent academic report from previous school and psychological report (if applicable).

Unaccompanied Minors

Enrolments will only be accepted from parents or guardians of prospective students.

Admission of unaccompanied students in non-fee paying schools is prohibited in St Mary's CBS in line with the policy outlined in "New Immigration Regime for Full Time Non-EEA Students" – Department of Justice and Equality (Ireland)

ENROLMENT OF AB INITIO (from the beginning) FIRST YEARS

All applicants must have satisfactorily completed their Primary Education. Department of Education and Science rules also state that to be eligible for admission to the school, a boy must have reached 12 years of age on 1st January in the calendar year following the boy's entry into the school. A birth certificate will be required prior to acceptance of a student into the school.

Application Timeline:

Parents/Guardians please note the following procedure:

1. Applications will only be accepted on the official school Application Form. Application Forms are available, on request, from the school office and our school website www.portlaoisecbs.com from Thursday September 21st 2017.
2. The closing date and time for receipt of completed Application Forms is printed on the form. For the current First Year application process, (September 2018 - 1st Year Class) this date is Friday 13th October 2017 at 12 o'clock noon. This date will vary slightly from year to year.

3. Only fully completed applications will be processed.
4. As Applications are received by the School Office, they will be stamped and the date and time they are received will be entered on them. If an Application is handed in, a receipt will be issued with this time and date.
5. Proof that application forms are received by the school and those who return application forms by post / courier must retain proof of postage / delivery.
6. Places will be allocated by Friday 10th November 2017. Letters will be posted out on this day confirming the offer of a place.
7. On receipt of an offer of a place, parents / guardians must secure that place by completing and returning the Acceptance Slip which accompanies the offer by the appointed date of Friday 17th November by 12 noon.
8. Failure to return the completed Acceptance Slip by this date/time will result in the offer of the place being automatically withdrawn, and the place being offered to the next applicant on the waiting list.
9. Parents/guardians who decide not to accept an offer of a place are expected to inform the school in writing as soon as possible.
10. The Assessment Test will take place in the school on Saturday 25th November 2017 (9am) prior to the commencement of enrolment into the school. All students allocated a place should be aware that it is conditional upon the prospective pupil and his parents/guardian to attend school on this day to sit this Assessment Test. The results of this test assist the school in applying to the Department of Education & Skills for the appropriate learning supports which may need to be put in place for the following September. ALL students will be in mixed ability classes – this test is NOT for streaming purposes.
11. Anyone who is unable to provide a satisfactory explanation, in advance, for being absent on this date, may lose their allocated place.

On acceptance of a student into the school, Parents/Guardians and students will be required to confirm in writing, their acceptance of the school's Code of Behaviour and Homework Policy and the fact that, except in specially agreed circumstances, all students must stay on the school premises during the lunch break. If a Parent/Guardian and/or a student refuse to sign this acceptance form, the student will not be admitted to the school.

Late List

All relevant information should be clearly stated on the original application. Additional information will not be considered after the closing date for applications.

Parents/Guardians shall sign a statement confirming that all information supplied is true and accurate. Failure to do so may result in the offer of a place being rescinded. The Board of Management reserves the right to verify the information supplied.

Any applications received after the closing time and date, shall be kept on file and ranked on a Late List in the order (date and time) they apply. They shall only be considered after all applicants who applied on time have been considered.

ENROLMENT OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Board of Management welcomes boys with disabilities and boys with Special Educational Needs and will seek to ensure that the resources required to meet the boys' needs are obtained from the Department of Education & Skills.

The Board of Management may require an assessment to establish the educational and training needs of the child and to identify the support services necessary.

Parents / Guardians of pupils with Special Needs must provide the school, in advance, with the following information:

1. Details of the disability or special educational need.
2. Copies of Psychological Reports & Educational Reports.
3. Details of the Medical Condition (if applicable).
4. Details of Resources provided in Primary School.
5. Special resources or supports required or expected in Secondary School.
6. Any other special facilities required.

APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS YEARS OTHER THAN FIRST YEARS:

The Board of Management and Principal may consider late Applications for consideration based on availability of a place in an appropriate class and the reason for the lateness of the application. If places become available for late applicants, they will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

APPLICATIONS TO REPEAT THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE

The school will make every effort to accommodate students who wish to repeat the Leaving Certificate. However, this will be subject to:

- The subject options available.
- The places available within the subject class groupings.
- The curricular restrictions of each subject area.
- Will be in accordance with Department of Education and Skills Circular M02/95.
- Repeat students must repeat all subjects

The Parents/Guardians of students wishing to repeat the Leaving Certificate should contact the Principal to arrange a meeting to discuss the possibility of repeating the Leaving Certificate. In deciding whether a student will be allowed to repeat, the Principal will consider:

- The student's application to his academic studies during his time in the school.
- Any previous breaches of health & safety regulations.
- Any previous interference with the learning of other students.

- Applications of recent internal Leaving Certificate candidates will take priority over external applications to repeat.

If the Principal has concerns in any of these areas, then he may refer the application to the Board of Management for their consideration.

APPLICATIONS TO DO TRANSITION YEAR

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES FOR TRANSITION YEAR

Mission

To promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative, and responsible members of society.

Overall Aims

The following aims are interrelated and interdependent and should be strongly reflected in every Transition Year programme:

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

The Transition Year Programme at St Mary's CBS is not compulsory. The maximum number of available places will be dependent upon staffing, facilities and resources and will be determined annually by the Board of Management. Priority shall be given to students in St Mary's CBS who are completing 3rd year. This shall be published on the school website by March 1st before the application process begins.

For acceptance on to the Transition Year Programme, the school must be of the opinion that a student is capable of benefiting from participation in Transition Year and, equally, that his/her participation will not prevent any other student(s) from benefiting from participation. Any decision in this regard will be taken by the Transition Year Admissions Committee.

The Transition Year Admissions Committee

The T.Y. Admissions Committee will be responsible for assessing applications and offering places. The committee will comprise of the

- Programme Coordinator,
- Transition Year Coordinator,
- Year Head of the current Third Year students,
- The Principal
- or a nominee of the Principal to replace one of the above, who may be unavailable due to illness or other circumstances.

Application Procedures

1. After the February Midterm Break, students will be informed about all options available to them. An Information Afternoon will be delivered to the Third Year Students and an evening presentation will be delivered to parents/guardians outlining all the choices, including Transition Year, Traditional Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).
2. Those wishing to apply for Transition Year must submit their application on the Transition Year Application form by the specified deadline. This form will be available in the school.
3. The Admissions Committee will meet and include the following criteria in their decision making:
 - Application Form
 - Interview (by a member of the Transition Year Committee)
4. The Interview Marking Criteria and Marking Scheme will be made known to the applicants when applying. It will comprise the following criterion:
 - Student's Behaviour Record to date
 - Student's Attendance Record
 - Application to work over the last three years
 - Recommendation of the Year Head
 - Consultation with teaching staff
 - Suitability of the applicant to the Programme
 - Suitability of the Programme for individual applicants
5. All students who apply for Transition Year will be interviewed.
6. Letters of acceptance/refusal will be distributed to students.
7. Payment of the Transition Year Deposit by the notified date will guarantee a place.
8. In the case of a student who is not offered a place by the T.Y. Admissions' Committee, an appeal may be made in writing to the Principal within 10 school days of the date places were offered. The Appeal will be heard within 10 school days of receipt of the appeal.

In the case of a student who is not offered a place by the Principal on appeal, a subsequent appeal may be made in writing to the Board of Management within 10 school days of the date on which the Principal issues a written decision. The appeal will be heard by the Board of Management at its next scheduled meeting.

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available then places will be allocated based on the marking carried out during the interview.

TRANSFERS OF STUDENTS FROM OTHER POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Board of Management recognises a student's right to education and that a "second-chance" may, in some circumstances, benefit a student.

On this basis applications for transfer from other post primary schools are normally only considered where the following conditions are met;

1. Application for entry to the school is for boys only.
2. The applicant's presence is unlikely to adversely affect the education of the students already enrolled in the school.
3. The applicant has no previous history of substance abuse or of the distribution of such substances.
4. The applicant has never seriously harassed/assaulted/bullied other students or staff members in his previous school(s).
5. The applicant has not previously in a serious manner hindered the educational progress of other fellow students i.e. persistently interfered with the teaching and learning and infringed the rights of others to proper educational provision
6. The subjects available are suitable to the applicant and the applicant is willing to attend classes in all curriculum subjects provided for the class group he is joining.
7. There is sufficient space in the class (i.e. using the maximum class size guidelines).

Before completing the official Application Form all applicants for transfer from other Post Primary Schools must provide details of:

1. Reasons for transfer.
2. Report on attendance, punctuality and behaviour in transferring school.
3. Copies of all school and State Examinations Commission Examination Results.
4. Furnish a letter from the Principal of the transferring school to support the application.

STUDENTS SUSPENDED / EXPELLED FROM OTHER SCHOOLS

In exceptional circumstances, the Board may, at its discretion, give consideration to an application in respect of a pupil excluded / suspended from or requested to leave another post primary school provided it considers that the applicant is likely to benefit educationally from such a transfer and where the current students are unlikely to be adversely affected by the admission of the applicant. Any admission approved in such a case will be conditional on the Board being satisfied with the undertaking given to abide by the Code of Behaviour and the likelihood of the applicant behaving in a proper manner in future.

The School must be satisfied with the reasons for transfer.

Decisions will be made within 21 days of receiving the completed Application Form.

Parents/Guardians will be required to follow the normal registration process and confirm in writing that they will accept the school's Code of Behaviour and Homework Policy and will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their son will abide by that Code.

Contact with the Education Welfare Officer will be made where necessary.

If the student has special educational needs or has had resource time allocated to him in his previous school, please submit details as outlined above in the section on Special Needs Student Applications for First Year.

All transfer students will meet with Guidance Counsellor as soon as possible after registration.

Admission of students transferred will be subject to the approval of the Board of Management.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INCLUDING REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

All male International students will be accepted for enrolment, upon application, provided:

1. The Board has verified the identity of the student and that the application is made by a parent/guardian.
2. There is sufficient space in the appropriate Year Group / Class.
3. That the subjects available suit.
4. The parents/guardians register their acceptance of the Code of Behaviour and Homework Policy.
5. The student meets with Guidance Counsellor to clarify the suitability of subject choice and of subject levels

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WHO DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH

Applicants will be accepted on the basis of the information provided by parents/guardians or by relevant agencies, on the same basis as for other international students. Additional English language teaching will be provided where the Department of Education and Skills provide relevant additional teaching resources.

MID YEAR APPLICANTS

Mid year applications will normally only be considered where families are relocating to the school's catchment area. Application for entry to the school is for boys only.

Applications for transfers in to examination classes will be dissuaded, where alternative arrangements are possible, because of the likely negative impact on the examination results of the student.

The following procedure will apply to Mid Year applicants:

1. The applicant fulfilling the conditions outlined in the Admissions Policy.
2. The school being satisfied with the reason for the transfer.
3. The school being satisfied that the transfer is in the best interest of the student.
4. A place being available in a suitable class with appropriate subject choices.
5. Consultation with the Education Welfare Officer (if appropriate).

It is school policy not to accept students into the school after Easter in any given school year. Such applicants will be encouraged to apply for entry into the school at the beginning of the next school year.

APPLICATIONS FROM STUDENTS OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE

Boys eighteen years and over can apply for admission in the same way as can parents and guardians and will be considered as outlined above.

REFUSAL TO ADMIT A STUDENT

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application for admission where:

1. The Board believes that admitting the student is not in the best interest of the student.
2. The Board believes that admitting a student would adversely affect the education of the students in its care.
3. The Board believes that admitting the student would pose serious risks to the health and safety of the students in its care or staff members.
4. Misleading or inadequate information was provided to the school.

This list is not exhaustive.

Such refusal to admit a student in exceptional circumstances will only be done in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and Circular 48/01.

Parents / Guardians who are dissatisfied with an enrolment decision, may appeal to the Board of Management. It must be addressed, in writing, to the Secretary of the Board, stating the grounds for the appeal, and lodged within ten days of receiving the refusal. The Board will give a decision on this appeal within ten school days. Parents/Guardian, if unhappy with the result of this appeal, may appeal to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act on the official form provided by the Department. This appeal must be lodged within 42 days of receipt of the refusal from the school to enrol. Parents can take a Section 29 appeal without first appealing to the Board of Management or waiting for the result of such an appeal.

DATA PROTECTION

The school is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. Personal data supplied on the application form will be used for the purposes of student enrolment, registration, administration, child welfare and to fulfil 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 for us to exchange personal data on a confidential basis with other bodies including the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, An Garda Siochana, the Health Service Executive or the National Education 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 changes in the information provided. Should you wish to update or access your son's personal data, you should write to the School Principal.

REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Board of Management will review the Admissions Policy annually in line with evolving legislation and practice, including the Education Act, the Equal Status Act and all related statutory and regulatory requirements.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 22nd August 2017 and was approved for publication by ERST under Section 15 of the Education Act 1998 on

Signed: _____
Justin Brown
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Appendix 1

Calendar of Dates for Enrolment for 1st Year 2018/19

<u>Week beginning 18/09/17</u>	Application Forms distributed to the main Primary feeder schools in Portlaoise Parish, Stradbally, Timahoe. Applications are also available to download from our website: www.portlaoiseCBS.com and from the School Office for all other schools.
<u>04/10/17</u>	Open Night for Parents of incoming First Years. 6 pm
<u>13/10/17</u>	Closing date for receipt of completed Application Forms by 12 noon. <i>After this time, applications are put on a LATE LIST. There is no guarantee that applicants will be called from the Waiting List. It will depend on the numbers accepting places.</i>
<u>10/11/17</u>	Successful candidates will be offered a place (by post). Those on a Late List will also be notified of their position by post.
<u>17/11/17</u>	Confirmation by parents/guardians that they are accepting place (by submitting slip to office by 12 noon)
<u>25/11/17</u>	Assessment Test for incoming First Years.

Please note:

- 1. The assessment test does not have any bearing on admission criteria. It serves the purpose of identifying students with learning difficulties and enables the school to apply to the Department of Education for resource hours to help such students prior to the student entering the school.**