

# **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

St. Mary's Secondary School, is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School for girls only under the trusteeship of CEIST Ltd. It was founded by the Mercy Sisters in 1866.

Our school aims to provide:

- A caring and just environment where the professionalism of the staff and individuality of the student is recognised. The school needs to be a place where the girls feel at ease (student feels at ease), affirmed, accepted and listened to. This gives hope to the student and helps her develop into an adult who is content and happy.
- A grounding in the Catholic faith inspired by Christian values and standards.
- An atmosphere that instils in the student a love of learning and discovery which leads to academic success, to the best of each student's ability. The Curriculum prepares the student for the opportunities and experiences of adult life, which involves education for employment and leisure time.

CEIST Ltd. is committed to the successful implementation of recent education legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998) and the Education Welfare Act (2000). They fully subscribe to the underlying principles of the legislation: partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion, respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

## **PROGRAMMES:**

The school operates within the

- Context and parameters of the Department of Education & Science.
- Rights of the Trustees/Patrons as set out in the Education Act (1998).
- Religious Philosophy of the CEIST Charter.
- Funding and resources available.

The school supports the principles of:

- inclusiveness; equality of access and participation in the school;
- parental choice in relation to enrolments respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society ( Education Act, 15(2)).

## Implementation

- The financial and teaching resources of the school are provided by a combination of: Department of Education & Science grants and teachers allocations, voluntary contributions and funds.
- Implementation of the school plan and school policy must have due regard to resources and funding available.
- The school operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time by the Department of Education & Science.
- The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education & Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998.
- Pupils at Junior and Senior Cycle follow a core programme with a number of optional subjects. Transition Year is compulsory and L.C.V.P. is optional at Senior Level. Religious Education and Physical Education are part of the core programme.

## **SCHOOL DETAILS:**

The Board of Management consists of four nominees of the trustees-

*Sr. Eilish Mc Grath, Mr. F. Purcell, Ms. Mairead Herlihy, Mr. Gerard Moynihan*

Two Parents' Nominees:                      *Mrs. Brid O' Riordan*  
    *Mr. Conor Mc Mahon*

Two Teacher Nominees:                      *Ms. Catherine Kerrigan*  
    *Ms. Arlene O'Donoghue*

*Mr. Ciarán Cooke is the Principal and secretary to the Board of Management*

*Ms. Angela Collins is the Deputy Principal*

**There is an active Parent's Association and Student Council.**

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extra-curricular activities may be offered subject to demand and available personnel.

## **OPENING HOURS**

School begins at 9.00 am and finishes at 4.00 pm with the exception of Wednesdays, when school begins at 9.00 am and finishes at 1.00 pm.

Supervised study is available to second, third, fifth and sixth year students five days a week from 4.30 - 7.30 pm, with the exception of Wednesday when supervised study operates from 1.30 - 4.30 pm. Saturday study is also available for Leaving Cert Students.

Parent/Teacher meetings and the School Calendar operate within the parameters laid down by the Department of Education & Science.

All parents are requested to pay an annual registration fee to cover various costs incurred in the daily running of the school e.g. insurance, school journal, photocopying, house exams etc.

### **ENROLMENT PROCEDURES:**

The school accepts applications from girls only. Students wishing to enrol in St. Mary's Secondary School, Macroom should do so by completing the enrolment form and returning it to the school within three weeks of the school's annual Open Day.

An Open Day for intending pupils and their parents/guardians will be held in the school in September/October.

### **ASSESSMENT:**

It should also be noted that all applicants will be required to complete an assessment test in order to help the school to assess the needs of the student. This test is not used to exclude any student. The school operates a policy of non-streaming. All intending students will be notified of the date of the test.

### **NOTIFICATION:**

Decisions made in relation to admission are made by the Board of Management in accordance with school policy. Except in very exceptional circumstances, decisions regarding enrolment will be notified to parents/guardians by 1<sup>st</sup> of May of the year preceding entrance.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

St. Mary's Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school for girls only. To be eligible for admission to the school a girl must have reached 12 years of age on 1<sup>st</sup> January in the calendar year following the girl's entry into the school.

### **EXCESS APPLICATIONS**

In the event of excess applications resulting in the school not being able to provide places for all applicants due to lack of space, priority will be given on the following basis:

- (i) Those with sisters already in the school.
- (ii) To those within the catchment area and
- (iii) Thereafter on a first come, first served basis.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

St. Mary's Secondary School, Macroom welcomes students with special needs and will utilise the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Science to make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs up to a nominal cost so that these students are free to participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonably practicable.

While recognising and fully supporting parents'/guardians' 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 supply of resources, suitable to the needs of the individual student, being supplied by the Department of Education and Science.

The school welcomes applications from students with special educational needs unless the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned and the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated.

The Board of Management must be made aware of any special needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed where possible.

Parents/guardians are requested to outline the details of a child's special educational needs on the application form.

The Board of Management, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of these students can be met.

Contact will be made with the National Council for Special Educational Needs regarding special needs resources to which the student may be entitled.

The Principal may request a meeting with the parents/guardians of the student to discuss the application and the student's needs.

The parents/guardians of the student may request a meeting with the Principal to discuss the student's educational or other needs.

**NB** It may take some time for the Department of Education and Science to process such applications. Parents/guardians are strongly advised to inform the school as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of making an application.

As soon as is practicable, but no later than 21 days, after a parent/guardian has provided all the relevant information, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/guardians in writing thereof ( Education Welfare Act (Section 19 (3)).

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Catholic Education values tolerance and inclusiveness within an increasing multicultural society. St. Mary's is a Catholic school supporting a Catholic ethos, based on universal values, which are formative for people of all faiths and is respectful traditions other than the Catholic tradition. The Religious Education (RE) syllabus is a state syllabus written to encompass all faiths.

RE is a core subject on the school curriculum and is an integral part of the ethos of the school. All pupils are expected to participate in RE class and school activities. The RE syllabus is a positive step forward in promoting understanding of other faiths as well as the Christian faith.

Religious education ensures that students are exposed to a large range of religious traditions and to non-religious interpretations of life. It has a particular role to play in the curriculum and in the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding. It is not a 'free class' to do homework. There is allocated time on the timetable for RE and faith formation, and students of other faiths are expected to use this time to study something relating to their own religious tradition, for example, a sacred text.

Withdrawal of students from RE class can present the school with considerable logistical and supervision dilemmas. Therefore this needs to be negotiated with management and addressed during the enrolment meeting. However the school expects that all students will remain in and take part in R.E. classes. The onus is on parents to provide suitable alternative texts should they be required.

In these cases, responsibility for supervision of the students at such times lies with the parents. This is because it is not possible for the school to provide such supervision from within the Department of Education's staff allocation to the school.

## **TRANSFERS**

Applications from girls only, to transfer to St. Mary's from another school are taken at any time, subject to the school's Admission policy. However the school must be satisfied with the reasons for the transfer and to this end information will be requested from the student's former schools concerning attendance, educational progress, disabilities and special needs. (Educational Welfare Act, 2000, Section 20).

With the best interest of the student in mind and her educational welfare and considering the issues relating to mid year transfer which may include subject choices, class sizes and available resources, the school Board of Management may decide to refuse admission at that time and advise her parents/guardians to reapply if they so wish at the start of the following school year.

## **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Finally the Board of Management wishes to state that it reserves the right to refuse an application for admission in exceptional circumstances. Parents have the right to appeal a refusal by a school to enrol a student under Section 29 of the Education Act.

The school recommends that prospective parents/guardians familiarise themselves with the following policy documents available from the school office:

- *Religious and Educational Philosophy of CEIST*
- *School's Code of Behaviour*
- *Anti Bullying policy*

- *Homework policy*
- *Health and Safety*

## **CHECKLIST**

When applying for admission you:

- *Complete an Enrolment Form for your daughter and submit it no later than January 10th of the year of entry*
- *Ensure that your daughter attends the assessment test*
- *Accept in writing the school's Code of Behaviour and undertake to make "all reasonable" efforts to ensure your daughter's cooperation with the Code. (Signed Declaration Form)*

Submit the following documentation:

- *Original Birth Certificate,*
- *2 Passport Photographs,*
- *P.P.S. number*

Please return completed enrolment forms to:

**The Principal,  
St. Mary's Secondary School,  
Macroom,  
Co. Cork.**

**Tel. No.: (026) 41544**

**Fax No.: (026) 42723**

**Website: [stmarysmacroom.ie](http://stmarysmacroom.ie)**

**E-mail: [adminstmarys@eircom.net](mailto:adminstmarys@eircom.net)**

**Ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School  
November, 2008**

**Ratified by the Board of Management March 2011  
(to include section on Religious Education)**

**Amended January 2013 – Dates for Open Day**