

St. Mary's Knockbeg College
Knockbeg,
Carlow

School Roll Number: 61130H



Admissions Policy
2025/26

School Patron:
The Roman Catholic Bishop
of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin

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 17-09-2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St. Mary's Knockbeg 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

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is a Catholic all boys voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of The Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Catholic Church, which seeks to promote:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects;
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people;
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus;
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

The ethos places an onus on our school to provide religious education in accordance with the doctrines, practices, and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, which may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Mary's Knockbeg College 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.

Catholic education provides an opportunity for a human being to grow and develop in an environment which takes its values from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Catholic education is focused on continuing the mission of Jesus Christ and building up the kingdom of God.

As a Catholic diocesan secondary school, St. Mary's Knockbeg College is a living expression of a long and varied tradition of education inspired by the life of Christ. The dignity of the human person as a child of God called to work with other persons in creating an inclusive community in service of the common good, where knowledge is sought and respected while faith is nurtured and challenged is of very significant importance in the life of the school.

As a Catholic diocesan secondary school, St. Mary's Knockbeg College values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities. Our school seeks to build a quality learning community that welcomes, and bears witness to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of Christ's teachings. St. Mary's Knockbeg College accepts all students irrespective of their Religious beliefs. All students will be treated equally with their personal beliefs being fully respected and nurtured in so far as is possible. These are encapsulated in the core values which are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our school.

- (a) Promoting the holistic development of each member of the school community including the spiritual, moral, emotional, social, intellectual, physical and human aspects;
- (b) Striving to excel in teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom;
- (c) Creating a caring school community that celebrates its diversity and keeps partnership and inclusion at the centre of all of its activities;
- (d) Encouraging effective leadership, especially Christian leadership, at all levels;
- (e) Continuing the ministry of Jesus Christ through nurturing a faith community.

Our Catholic school is an inclusive community underpinned by the interaction and collaboration of its stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, members of the Board of Management. Furthermore, our school draws on the rich resources of the local community and contributes to the life of that community.

Mission Statement

Our school exists to provide a balanced and holistic education for each of our students. Our aim is to enable and empower students to acquire the self-confidence, academic qualifications, life skills and attitudes for leading satisfying lives which should contribute to the betterment of the Church and society. We regard ourselves as a Christian community where the values of the Gospel find daily expression in our Catholic ethos and all our policies and practices as we nourish a spirituality of compassion, justice and forgiveness.

General Objectives of St. Mary's Knockbeg College

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is a school whose objective is to assist in the development of all aspects of the student, the spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and social at all times guided by the Gospel values in keeping with Catholic tradition. The school reflects these values in the day to day life of the school through Catholic religious' celebration, signs and symbols. Parents,

students and staff are all expected to respect this tradition.

3. Admission Statement

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is an all-boys school and will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) 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.

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is an all-boys school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a girl applying for admission to this school.

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits students of Roman Catholic denomination in preference to others.

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes Catholic religious' values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of students where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic denomination and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is a school that, in addition to the general admission of students has, with the approval of the Minister, established a two classroom Special Educational Needs Base to cater for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

St. Mary's Knockbeg college will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council. ·

St. Mary's Knockbeg College will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

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

St. Mary's Knockbeg College is committed to the concept of inclusion. The school is committed to the provision of an educational programme which will meet the needs of all the students enrolled in the school, in so far as it is practicable.

St. Mary's Knockbeg College with the approval of the Minister of Education and Skills supports a double classroom Special Educational Needs Base to cater for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Application forms for admission to these special classes will be available on our website or on request from the school and must be submitted at the same time as standard applications.

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/gurdian 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/her and that he/she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student
- c) St. Mary's Knockbeg College provides education exclusively for boys and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.
- d) St. Mary's Knockbeg College is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for boys under the Trusteeship of the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.
- e) The special class attached to St. Mary's Knockbeg College will provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder 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.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, St. Mary's Knockbeg College will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those *eligible applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice. (Note: * DES Post Primary eligibility - in order to be eligible for enrolment applicants must have completed 6th Class (or its equivalent) and have reached the age of 12 years on the 1st of January in the calendar year following entry to second level).

Offer of Places

Pupils will be offered places strictly in the following order:

1. Applicants who have a brother who is attending or has attended (past student) the school. A past student is any person who completed the Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate in the school.
2. Applicants who have a parent who is an employee of Knockbeg college for at least two years at the time of application.
3. Applicants who have a parent or grandparent who is a past student of the school. A past student is any person who completed the Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate in the school. St. Mary's Knockbeg College will only apply this criterion to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice. The number of places is 25% of the available places available. The number of places will be decided annually by the Board of Management.

Notes:

- 3.1 Should there be an excess of applicants in this category, the places will be allocated based on random selection. The random selection will be conducted by an Admissions Committee appointed by the Board of Management.
- 3.2 Applicants who are unsuccessful in this category will be accounted for in Category 5.
4. Applicants who submitted a fully completed application before February 2020 as outlined in the Admissions Bill.
5. All other eligible applicants will be considered and offered places, if available, once applications are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

The Board of Management will only enter names of students in the selection process for whom fully completed application forms are received by the school office. It is the responsibility of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to ensure that applications are submitted within the time as published in the Annual Admissions Notice on the school website. The Board will not accept responsibility for any late applications received.

Excess of Applicants

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:

- Where the number of places available is less than the number of applicants in each of the categories above (1-4), places will be allocated based on random selection. The random selection will be conducted by an 'Admissions Committee' appointed by the Board of Management. Applicants who are unsuccessful in a particular category will be accounted for in the subsequent category.
- In respect of siblings (twins, triplets etc. apply) from the same family, we will treat the application as single application in the lottery.
- When all places are filled, names of applicants will continue to be drawn to establish the order of the Waiting List.
- If a vacancy arises it will be offered to the applicant highest on the waiting list.

Late applications will be considered in order of receipt of application subject to the above criteria. Late applications in any year will only be considered after all on-time applications have been processed.

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;
- c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to admission to a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned;
- d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- e) a requirement that a student, or his parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his family attending or having previously attended the school other than:
 - (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and
 - (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, St. Mary's Knockbeg College will only apply this criterion to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

- g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St. Mary's Knockbeg College 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 St. Mary's Knockbeg College 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 are 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 St. Mary's Knockbeg College 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 they 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.

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

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 name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

All Data will be protected under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulations as outlined in the school GDPR Policy.

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St. Mary's Knockbeg 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 St. Mary's Knockbeg 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 closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

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 following section relates to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, and to students who wish to transfer into 1st Year after the start of the school year, provided no waiting list is in place from the initial enrolment process as outlined in Section 13

Where a waiting list is in place, applicants for 1st Year will be added to the end of the waiting list, provided the application is made in accordance with all other procedures and criteria detailed in this policy. While it is appreciated that in certain exceptional circumstances transfers

are unavoidable (e.g. a change of residence or a family moving into the area) as a matter of general policy transfers into the school are discouraged in the overall interests of the continuity of the student's education.

In general, it is the policy of the Board of Management not to accept transfer applications from students currently enrolled in other local post-primary schools. In certain circumstances, however (e.g. a family who have moved into the area and an applicant is not currently enrolled in a local Post-Primary school) the school will make reasonable efforts to facilitate an applicant seeking to enrol in accordance with the criteria stated in this policy.

A completed application form must be submitted. The school will process the application and then refer the application to the Board of Management for the decision to enrol. In addition to the guiding principles outlined above, admission is subject to and in no particular order:

- School's Admission Policy
- The school being satisfied with the reason(s) for transfer
- The school regarding the move to be in the best interest of the student seeking transfer/enrolment
- The school regarding the move to be in the best interest of students currently enrolled in the school
- Consideration of issues relating to mid-year/mid-programme transfer such as class sizes, subject options, schedule of Classroom Based Assessments and availability of resources.
- The school must be satisfied that it can meet in full the curriculum needs of the applicant wishing to transfer with regard to subject options/levels and that it can provide a full timetabled curriculum
- The applicant has sufficient background in subjects to be able to progress.
- Students seeking to transfer will not be considered for enrolment into year groups due for State Examination the following June (3rd & 6th Year). This is in order to ensure we can adequately meet students' needs, ensure all elements of the required curriculum are covered, and to know the student individually should difficulties arise, particularly around examination time. However, in such cases transfer students may, if deemed appropriate, be afforded the opportunity to apply for admission into 2nd /TY /5th Year, subject to the criteria outlined in this policy

In submitting an application, the applicant and his parents/guardians are confirming that they have read, and agree to adhere to, the school's ethos and mission, Admissions Policy, Code of Behaviour and Data Protection Policy.

Repeat students will be enrolled in line with this Admissions Policy and numbers based on space in class/subject groups in any given year and/or in the context of overall school numbers.

Within the overall enrolment capacity, the maximum number in any standard class group will be 30 students and in practical subjects, 24 students.

Before Enrolment Application Forms will be issued for admission of students to other years and during the school year, applicants and their parent/guardian are required to meet with the Principal. This is to help determine whether or not the school can meet the individual curriculum needs of the applicant as well as their personal, social and emotional needs, in line with our mission & ethos. School management may contact the current and all former post-primary school(s) attended by the applicant. In the case of application for 1st Year, outside of the standard annual intake process outlined above beginning on page 2, the former primary school(s) will also be contacted. Applicants may then submit an Enrolment Application Form.

Applications will only be deemed complete once the following documentation has been received by the school.

1. Completed Enrolment Application Form.
2. School reports from previous two years (previous year if applicant has only completed 1st Year).
3. Copies of Junior/Leaving Certificate result/equivalent exams from abroad (where applicable).
4. Copy of applicant's birth certificate.
5. Transfer Information Form - on receipt of 1 to 4 above, St. Mary's Knockbeg College will forward a Transfer Information Form to the applicant's current school through the parent/guardian and, where relevant, all former post-primary schools. The Transfer Information Form includes, but is not limited to, information on behaviour, attendance, student/family supports and academic progress. It forms part of the application process.

N.B. It is the responsibility of the applicant to furnish the school with 1 to 4 above and ensure the previous school forwards the completed Transfer Information Form.

Once an application is deemed complete (receipt of 1 – 5 above) the school will process the application in line with this Admissions Policy and the relevant legislation.

The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

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

The Board of Management of St. Mary's Knockbeg 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

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- (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

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend St. Mary's Knockbeg College without attending religious instruction should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how that 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.

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 to 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.

19. Review of policy

The Admissions Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals by the Board of Management, staff, parents, and the student body.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 30-11-2023

Signed: Michael Regan
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 30-11-2023

Signed: Michael Carew
(Principal)

Date: 30-11-2023

Date for Review: