

Loreto College, Mullingar

Admissions Policy – 2010-2011

General Introduction

Loreto College, Mullingar is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for girls in the Loreto tradition. The Loreto Education Trust is the Patron of the school under the terms of the Education Act, 1998. The Board of Management is authorised by the Loreto Education Trust Board to fulfil its role in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Articles of Management for Voluntary Catholic Secondary Schools.

Mission Statement

Loreto College, Mullingar is a Catholic Secondary school in the Loreto tradition. 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 for staff.

The School

Loreto College has 754 students (2009-2010), and 43 full-time and 8 part-time teachers.

There are two teachers specifically deployed to provide learning support. The school employs Career Guidance Counsellors and a Chaplain.

The Board of Management is committed to compliance with the relevant education legislation, in particular, the Education Act, 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Equal Status Act, 2000-2004 and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004.

The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science and operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by that Department. School policy must have regard to the resources and funding available to the Board of Management. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be

amended, from time to time, in accordance with section 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

Within the context and parameters of Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the trustees as set out in the Education Act (1998), and the level of funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with disabilities or other special needs;
- Equality of access and participation in the school;
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment;
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

Loreto College is open from Monday to Friday inclusive and the tuition hours are 9a.m. to 4p.m. Mon- Thursday and 9 a.m. to 3.15 p.m. on Friday. The Principal, Deputy Principal and relevant members of staff are available to meet parents, by prior appointment, during the school day. A parent-teacher meeting is arranged for each year group during the school year. There is a very active and supportive Parents' Advisory Council in the school.

Board of Management

The managerial authority of the school is the Board of Management which is appointed by the trustees. The Board consists of the following:

Four members nominated by the trustees of the school.

Two parent nominees, elected by the parents of students of the school.

Two teacher nominees, elected by the teaching staff of the school.

Admission to the school is a function of the Board of Management.

The Board delegates responsibility for the day- to- day management of the school to the Principal, assisted by the Deputy Principal and holders of Posts of Responsibility. It is the remit of the Principal to allocate students to classes and her decision in this regard is final.

Enrolment Procedures

1. The Board of Management will communicate through local primary schools and local media regarding application procedures for the following academic year, 2010 – 2011. Application must be made by completing the appropriate form available from the school and from the relevant primary schools as and from ***Monday, 11 January, 2010***. An ***Open Evening*** will be held on ***Wednesday, 20 January, 2010***. Completed forms must be received in the school office ***on or before 4.30pm on Friday, 29 January, 2010***. Within 21 days of this closing date, each applicant will receive a reply from the school indicating whether or not she is being offered a place. In the school year, 2010 – 2011, 150 places will be offered in First Year. Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

2. Acceptance of Places

Having received the offer of a place, each successful applicant must secure her place by completing the letter of acceptance, which accompanies the offer. The letter of acceptance must be signed by the applicant and her parent/parent(s)/guardian(s), and

must be received in the school office on or before the required date stated in the letter from the school offering the place. Failure to reply by this date will result in the offer of a place being withdrawn and an offer being made to an applicant on the reserve list.

3. Decisions in relation to applicants for admission

The relevant decisions are made by the Board of Management in accordance with the school policy on Admissions. The Principal of the College, acting on behalf of the Board of Management, will apply the criteria set out below in the allocation of places:

In the event of the number of applications exceeding the number of available places, applicants will be allocated places in the following order.

- A. To sisters of students already in the school, sisters and daughters of past pupils i.e. past pupils who have completed Junior Cycle and/or Senior Cycle in Loreto College and daughters of non-casual employees, who have worked in this school for at least 3 school years.
- B. To girls attending the following feeder schools; Presentation Senior School, St Colmans(Bellview), Gaelscoil an Mhuileann, Curraghmore N.S., Kilpatrick N.S., Gainstown N.S., and St Brigids Special School, Educate Together and All Saints, in order of receipt of application by the school*
- C. To girls from Mullingar, but not attending the schools to which par. B above refers, in order of receipt of application by the school*
- D. To girls from a defined outer area, attending primary schools in the following areas: Multyfarnham, Taughmon, Kinnegad, Rochfortbridge, Dysart, Milltown, Collinstown, Castletown-Geoghean, Coole, Delvin and Ballynacaragy in order of receipt of application by the school*
- E. E. To girls from outside the above areas in order of receipt of application by the school*

*Note:

If demand exceeds capacity, the total number of places available in a given category may be less than the number of applicants in that category. In such circumstances, places will be offered on the basis of date of receipt of application by the school and in the event that the date of application is the same, then the remaining places will be allocated 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 representative of the Board of Management and a representative of the Parents' Association. The name of each student entitled to participate in the random process will be placed in a drum. The Principal will draw names from the drum, one by one, until the drum is empty. The order in which the names are drawn will be recorded on a numbered list and places will be offered in that order until available places are filled.

Waiting List

When the available places have been filled, a 'waiting list' will be drawn up based on the date of receipt of applications by the school. In the event that two or more applications are received on the same day, their order on the 'waiting list' will be determined by the random process described above.

Discretionary Places

In addition to the above, the Board of Management reserves the right to allocate a small number of discretionary places, (not more than three), having considered special medical, social and/or family circumstances made known, in writing, to the Board of Management at the time of application.

The Board of Management's decision in relation to any aspect of enrolment is final but subject to the outcome of any appeals in the context of Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

4. Deferral of Places

The Board of Management will consider applications to defer acceptance of a place offered in Loreto College for one year for sound educational, family or personal reasons, provided such application is supported by relevant documentation and received before Easter of the year in which the student is due to commence her second-level education in Loreto College.

5. Students with Special Needs

Loreto College, Mullingar welcomes students with special educational needs and will use 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 in a position to participate in the life of the school insofar as is reasonably practicable.

While recognising and fully supporting parents'/guardians' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the College's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply of resources, suitable to the needs of the individual student, being provided by the Department of Education and Science.

The College welcomes students with special educational needs unless the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student 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 at the time of application.

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.

In relation to application for the enrolment of children with special needs, the Board of Management may request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available, request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report. If the Board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request the Department of Education and Science, to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report.

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

6. Transfer of Students

In the case of students seeking to transfer to Loreto College, Mullingar, from another post-primary school, the following procedures apply:

Parents/guardians who request a place for their daughter(s) in a class in which a place may be available must complete an application form. The girl applying may be interviewed by the Principal who may be accompanied by the Deputy Principal or a member of the teaching staff. All relevant data – attendance, school reports (as per the Education Welfare Act, 2000) concerning the applicant will be sought by the Principal from the Principal of the school which the applicant is attending or has most recently attended.

The reason for the proposed transfer will be discussed with the parents/guardians and the student, as appropriate.

Transfer to the school shall be on the basis that it would be in the best interests of the student concerned, given curricular provision, subject choices, facilities available at the time and any other relevant factors affecting the educational benefits to the applicant and the likely impact on students already in the school.

A decision about the transfer of the student to the school will be conveyed to the parents within 21 days of the interview referred to above on condition that all the required data has been received by the Principal.

7. Right to Appeal

Parents/guardians whose daughter has not been allocated a place in the College may appeal this decision in the first instance to the Board of Management and subsequently, if necessary, to the Department of Education and Science, under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

The appeal to the Department of Education and Science must be made within 42 calendar days from the date that the decision of the Board of Management was notified to the parents/guardians. The Appeals Application Form can be downloaded from the website: www.education.ie or obtained from the school office.

8. Review and Ratification

This policy is subject to review at the discretion of the Board of Management but sufficiently in advance to allow changes to be communicated to interested parties.

Disciplinary Code

Rules help us all create a pleasant and orderly environment, in our school, for quality teaching and learning for every one.

While these rules are essential for the everyday running of the school, the ethos of the school cannot be encompassed by rules. Care, courtesy, and consideration should characterise the behaviour of the pupils at all times. This calls for respect for teachers, other members of staff, fellow pupils and all those they encounter both in school and travelling to and from school. Students are expected to be polite and respectful to all staff and teachers and to accept their right to advise and correct them.

1. (a) All pupils must be punctual for class. In the morning they should be present at 9a.m. and at 2p.m. after lunch. Each student must use the swipe card registration system every morning.

(b) Pupils who are not on time for the first class in the morning must sign “the late book” or will be marked absent for the day.

(c) Students must remain in the school premises at all times throughout the school day.
2. No pupil must absent herself from school without permission.

(a) School Absences

Parents must sign the reason for absence when student is returning to school.

(b) Permission to leave school early.

Parents should write a note for permission for a student to leave school early stating the time and date and sign it.

3. **Truancy** for a full day or part thereof will result in automatic suspension.
4. **School Uniform**
The uniform must be worn in full each day. Students not in full uniform may not be allowed attend class.
5. **Smoking**
Smoking is now illegal in public places, such as schools, so students are Not allowed to smoke on school premises or school grounds. Breach of This rule will normally result in suspension as the appropriate sanction.
6. **Illicit drugs and alcohol**
No student may possess, distribute, consume or be under the influence of Alcohol or drugs during school hours or any activity organised by the School. Breach of this rule will result in immediate suspension by the Principal until the Board of Management considers the matter further.

Distribution of drugs and alcohol may result in permanent exclusion

1. **Mobile Phones**
Students must switch off mobile phones between 9 a.m.- 11 a.m., 11.15a.m. –1p.m., and 2 p.m.- 4 p.m. Breach of this rule will result in confiscation of phone.

Picture Phones
Picture phones are banned completely from the school premises/grounds.
2. **Bullying**
This is not tolerated. Bullying is the wilful desire to hurt, threaten or intimidate someone else, in any way.
3. It is a serious offence to interfere with the fire safety systems or behave in any way that puts the safety of students and staff at risk.
4. It is important to be tidy and careful and respectful with your own property and the property of others.
5. Students must never behave in a manner which would damage the reputation of our school.
6. For health and safety reasons, items such as nose studs, eyebrow rings or Bars or other items of facial piercing must be removed before entering the school grounds.

Any breach of the above rules will be subject to any of the following sanctions.

SANCTIONS

- Reporting to the year head.
- Reporting to the Deputy Principal.
- Reporting to the Principal.
- Detention at lunch – hour.
- Repeated breach of school rules will result in suspension.
- Exclusion is considered when there is a serious breach of the school rules or when a student's behaviour endangers the well-being of others or interferes in a serious way with their education.

Code of Conduct

In Loreto College we seek to develop a sense of community that reflects the ethos of the Catholic School and the vision of the Loreto Sisters. This is a commitment to *'holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalized. It is the process influenced by the Gospel and conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy'* to achieve this effectively we strive to foster a sense of order and discipline.

Sanctions may have to be imposed in this context, but the ideal is that students will acquire the skills of self-discipline, consideration and co-operation that foster a good working and social environment. The code will have regard to the rights and responsibilities of all parties concerned with the school: management, teachers, ancillary staff, students and their parents.

Mutual Experience

The school will endeavour to deliver its commitment to students, as spelled out in the Mission Statement, provided that the students present themselves:

- Dressed in accordance with the school code;
- Punctuality for all classes;
- Attend regularly unless unavoidable through illness or other good reason;
- Apply themselves to the course provided;
- Behave in a respectful manner towards staff and students.

Expectations of Parents

Since the primary responsibility for the education of their children rests with parents we encourage you to take an active role in the life of the school by:

- Supporting school policy;
- Supporting the staff in their efforts to promote the moral welfare and academic progress of your children;
- Attend parent/teacher meeting each academic year;
- Ensure that there is a good environment for homework;
- Support for your daughter in her social development by providing boundaries around activities that would interfere with successful application to study homework;
- Regular contact with school concerning the development of your child;
- Financial support for the on-going development of the school, if that is possible;
- Supporting the work of the Parents Advisory Council.

Right of Appeals Under Education Act

Parent and students are advised of their rights of appeal to the Board of Management