



Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan

Roll Number: 60010P.

School Patron(s): Loreto Trust

Admissions Policy

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's patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on August 19th 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 Loreto Balbriggan's 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.

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

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school.

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan is an all girls' voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust Board.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan 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 as outlined below.

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust. Loreto schools seek to provide an education that affirms the innate dignity of every human being created in God's image, and fosters the full and harmonious development of each student, encompassing the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects in an environment of justice, freedom, sincerity, truth and joy. The creation of a dynamic school community where every student is equally cherished and has a real sense of belonging is a priority in a Loreto school which draws its inspiration from Gospel values and the rich heritage passed on to us from Mary Ward and Teresa Ball and enshrined in our documents on Loreto Education, including *Kolkata Educational Guidelines for Loreto Schools*, *Continuing the Journey: A Loreto Education* and *A Mary Ward Schools' Compass*. The IBVM was founded in 1609 by Mary Ward and Teresa Ball brought this tradition, which she named *Loreto*, to Ireland in 1821.

Students are encouraged to be reflective and discerning in the spirit of our Loreto and Ignatian tradition and continue to grow with integrity in right relationship with God, with other people and the environment. Our philosophy of holistic education places the person of the student at the centre of the educational enterprise which nurtures the student's capacity to "seek truth ... to love what is good ...

to strive for excellence” (Teresa Ball) and joyfully engage with life-long self-directed learning in all its dimensions. In so doing, we are committed to preparing students to take their place in society as generous, confident, perceptive, well-informed, articulate and compassionate people ready to contribute to the common good.

Loreto schools welcome students of all faiths and of none. While maintaining a Catholic ethos inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue together with a spirit of inclusivity and the celebration of diversity are fostered in the school. In harmony with our characteristic spirit and recognising that care of faith and education are fundamental to the Loreto tradition, religious education is central to our curriculum and the faith formation of Catholic students is supported by the school in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church.¹ Each student’s spiritual life is expressed and deepened through prayer and on continued reflection on the profound link between faith and justice and creative engagement with the dialogue of faith and life communicated in nature, in science and in the arts.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Mission Statement

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan is a Catholic girls’ secondary school. In the spirit of Mary Ward, we aim to develop all the abilities of our students in order that they realise their full potential and use their talents for the service of others. We also aim to encourage self-confidence and self-esteem in a happy atmosphere and structured environment. The school community, collaborating together in mutual respect, strives for holistic excellence.

3. Admission Statement

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

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

As per section 61(3) of the Education Act 1998, “civil status ground”, “disability ground”, “discriminate”, “family status ground”, “gender ground”, “ground of race”, “religion ground”, “sexual orientation ground” and “Traveller community ground” shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs,

¹ The school provides religious education in accordance with the doctrines, practices, and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

Loreto Balbriggan does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student, one who is not of the gender provided for by the school.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- (a) the school is oversubscribed
- (b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the students.
- (c) Loreto Balbriggan may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

5. Oversubscription

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

In the event that the number of application forms received exceeds the number of places available the completed application forms will be divided into three categories, as follows:

Category A:

Completed application forms received in respect of:

- i. Sisters of students in Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan and sisters of past students where past student is defined as a student having, in normal circumstances, completed their Leaving Certificate in Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan.
- ii. Female students from Balbriggan Parish Primary Schools as listed below:
 - Balbriggan Educate Together N.S.
 - Gaelscoil Baile Brigín.
 - Balcadden N. S.,
 - Bracken Educate Together N.S.
 - Scoil Chormaic C.N.S.
 - St. George's N. S.
 - St. Molaga's N. S.
 - St. Oliver's Plunkett's N. S., Balrothery,
 - St. Teresa's N. S.
- iii. Daughters/granddaughters of eligible staff in Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan where eligible staff is defined as non-casual employees of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan for a minimum of one academic year and who are reasonably expected to be employed by the school at the time their daughter commences secondary school.

- iv. Daughters/granddaughters of eligible past staff of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan where eligible past staff is defined as non-casual former employees of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan who have completed a minimum of 5 years' employment in the school.
- v. Daughter/granddaughters of past pupils of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan where a past pupil is defined as a student who under normal circumstances completed her Leaving Certificate in the school.

It should be noted that parents/guardians must indicate on the Application Form if they wish their daughter to be considered in Category A. If false information is given on the application form, the form will be placed at the end of the waiting list.

In line with subsection 7 (e) vi of the Education (Admissions to schools') Act 2018, no more than 25% of total places available will be offered to a student that fulfills the criteria of Category A (v).

Category B:

Completed Application Forms received in respect of:

Female students in the following schools:

- Ballyboughal N.S.
- Bellewstown N.S.
- Corduff N.S.
- Donabate/Portrane Educate Together
- Gaelscoil Ros Eo
- Garristown N.S.
- Hedgestown N.S.
- Holmpatrick, Skerries N.S.
- Laytown N.S.
- Le Chéile N.S., Mornington
- Lusk N.S.
- Lusk/Rush Educate Together N.S.
- Naomh Pdraig G.N.S., Donabate
- Naul N.S.
- Réalt na Mara N.S., Skerries
- Réalt na Mara N.S., Donacarney
- Rush N.S.
- Scoil an Bhreadáin Feasa
- Scoil Mobhi N.S., Milverton
- Skerries Educate Together
- St. Brendan's Loughshinny
- St. Catherine's N.S. Rush
- St. Patrick's N.S., Skerries
- St. Patrick's N.S. Stamullen
- Whitecross N.S. Julianstown

Category C:

Completed Application Forms received in respect of all other female students.

The Selection Process:

The Principal will apply the following criteria in the allocation of places:

- a. All properly completed applications received by the due date in respect of students in Category A will be allocated places before any places can be offered to students in Category B.
- b. If the application from Daughters/granddaughters as per section vi above exceeds 25% in line with subsection 7 (e) vi of the Education (Admissions to schools') Act 2018, an extra lottery will have to precede the main lottery. The name and school of each student will be placed in a container. The names will be drawn until the 25% quota is reached. Those names not drawn out during the first lottery will then be added to the relevant containers as per their category and school for selection in the main lottery.
- c. The places then remaining of the total will be allocated according to the Selection Process (see below) to students in Category B.
- d. All completed applications received by the due date in respect of students in Category B will be allocated places before any places can be offered to students in Category C.
- e. If places are available for students in Category C, these places will be allocated by the same Random Selection process (see below).

In the event that there are more applications received in respect of students in Category B than places available, the number of places to be offered to students in Category B schools will be on a percentage pro-rata basis directly proportional to the number of application forms received from each of the schools in Category B (see example below). It is not possible to guarantee that places will be offered to all schools. A random process (see below) will be used to select those students from each school in Category B to whom an offer of a place will be made. Please note that if a sibling is drawn during the random selection her sister(s) is/are automatically granted a place. The place to be created is in addition to the basic allocation of the school in question.

Some schools may not have sufficient applicants to qualify for an offer of a place in the above process. The names of the applicants from such schools will be placed in one specific lottery box together and drawn out on a pro-rata basis.

Example of Pro-Rata Proportional Basis:

The following sample numbers give an explanation of the method of allocation of places to the schools in Category B:

Total number of application forms received:	257
Comprising: Category A	85
Category B	152
Category C	20
Number of remaining places calculated as follows:	
	$210 - 85 = 125$
Number of applications received Category B	152

Category B				
Schools in Category B	Number of forms received	Percentage of total forms	Applying % to available places	Number of places to be allocated
School 1	40	26.32%	26.32% of 125 = 32.9	33
School 2	30	19.74%	19.74% of 125 = 24.7	25
School 3	20	13.16%	13.16% of 125 = 16.4	16
School 4	20	13.16%	13.16% of 125 = 16.4	16
School 5	15	9.87%	9.87% of 125 = 12.3	12
School 6	10	6.58%	6.58% of 125 = 8.2	8
School 7	8	5.26%	5.26% of 125 = 6.6	7
School 8	5	3.29%	3.29% of 125 = 4.1	4
School 9	4	2.63%	2.63% of 125 = 3.3	3
Totals	152	100%		125

In the above example, had the number of applications received in respect of students attending category B schools been less than 125, then places would have been available for applications received for girls attending Category C schools.

Random Selection Process

The Random Selection Process will take place on 7th November 2024 in the school.

The name of each student entitled to participate in this selection process will be placed in a container for each school. The names will be drawn from each container, one by one, until the maximum number of places allotted for each school in category B is reached. In the example above, 40 names would be placed in the container for school 1 and 32 names would be drawn out.

The order in which the names are drawn from the container will be recorded on a numerical list by the school secretary. Places will be offered in the order in which names are drawn from the container until the available places are filled. An independent commissioner will witness the drawing of the names. The principal, the deputy principal, a member of the parents' association, and the school's Feeder Schools Liaison Officer (assistant principal) will be present. Parents/Guardians of incoming applicants are welcome to attend.

If the number of applications received from girls in category B is less than the number of places available, the places will be allocated to girls from category C using the same random selection process, i.e., then the name of each student will be placed in a container and places will be offered in the order in which names are drawn from the container until the available places are filled. The remaining names will then be drawn and entered on a numbered waiting list.

If no places are available for category C, then the name of each student in category C will be placed in a container to be drawn and entered at the end of the category B waiting list.

6. 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 place a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) The payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (b) A student's academic ability, skills or aptitude.
- (c) The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) A requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission.
- (e) A student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of her family attending or having previously attended the school: (other than, in the case of this school (see above) wishing to include a selection criterion based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school. In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criterion to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).
- (f) The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school. This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Loreto Balbriggan 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.

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.

8. 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.

9. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant.

In accepting an offer of admission from Loreto Balbriggan, you must indicate –

- (a) 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
- (b) whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

Applicants should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.

10. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Loreto Balbriggan where –

- (1) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (2) 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
- (3) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (4) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of “acceptance of an offer” as set out above.
- (5) 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.”

11. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admissions 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 –

1. an application for admission to the school has been received,
2. an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

1. The date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
2. The date on which an offer of admission was accepted by the school;
3. The date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
4. A student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

12. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Loreto Balbriggan were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of Loreto Balbriggan is in 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.

13. 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 admission 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 end of the waiting list in order of the date and time of receipt of a completed application form.

14. Procedures for admission of students to a year group other than First Year and/or to any year group during the school year

Where parents wish to make an application for their daughter to a year group other than First Year or during the school year, they should in the first instance fill in an Application Form. An offer of a place can only be made if there is space in the year group in question. A decision on whether a place can be offered will be conveyed to the parents within 21 days of the initial application.

Before accepting the offer of a place in the school the parents and their daughter are strongly advised to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ascertain whether there is a place available in the particular subject classes required by their daughter. The fact that there may be a space in a year group would not automatically mean that there is a place available in a particular subject class at the level required by the student. This is because class size is limited in certain subjects. For this reason, parents and their daughter are strongly recommended to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to

ensure that a transfer to the school would be in the best interests of their daughter given the curricular provision, subject choices/levels and facilities available at the time.

Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant to a year group other than First Year or during the school year: The parents must confirm their acceptance in writing of an offer of a place within two weeks of the date of the offer of a place. In accepting an offer of admission from Loreto Secondary School Balbriggan, the parents must indicate—

- (i) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and
- (ii) whether or not they have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, they must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

Parents 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.

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Loreto Secondary School Balbriggan 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 within two weeks of the date of the offer of a place;
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student;
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out above;
- (v) 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.

Oversubscription to the year group other than First Year:

In the event of there being more applications to the year group other than First Year than places available, a waiting list of students, whose application for admission to the particular year group has been refused, will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

The date of receipt of a properly completed Application Form will determine the position on this waiting list within each of the criteria. In the unlikely event that there are two or more students tied for a place then the position on the waiting list (for places in a year group other

than First year) will be determined by a lottery process overseen by the Principal and Deputy Principal.

Offers of any subsequent places in the year group other than First Year that become available during the school year 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.

Applicants should note that the provisions of Section 11 above relating to the sharing of data with other schools will apply in all cases where an application is made to a year group other than First Year or during the school year.

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

The Board of Loreto Balbriggan or any persons acting on its behalf shall not, except in accordance with section 64 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2019, charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of –

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Where the parents, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, have requested that the student attend the school without attending the religious instruction in the school, arrangements are set out in the school's policy on Non Participation in Religious Education as per the school website. This policy is available on the school website or by contacting the school office.

17. 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 and DES circular 0069/2020.

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 and DES circular 0069/2020 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 and DES circular 0069/2020.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must, within 21 days, request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and DES circular 0069/2020.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the application **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 and DES circular 0069/2020.

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 decision by the Board of Management)

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

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 9th September 2024

Signed: 
Chairperson

Signed: 
Principal/Secretary, Board of Management