



# Admission Policy of Gort Community School

**School Address: Gort, Co. Galway**  
**Roll number: 91498C**

## **School Patrons:**

**Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB)**  
**The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora (Bishop Michael Duignan)**  
**The Mercy Sisters (CEIST)**

## **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/guardian of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 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 Gort Community School 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**

Gort Community school is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB), the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora (Bishop Brendan Kelly) and the Mercy Sisters.

Community Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Community Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened on 4th September 1995. The school is an amalgamation of St Colman's Vocational school, Our Lady's Secondary

School and the Mercy Covent Secondary school. The values of GRETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of Bishop Brendan Kelly and the Mercy Sisters are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Gort Community School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, our school, provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Gort Community School provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In Gort Community School we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Gort Community School 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.

Gort Community School is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

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

Gort Community School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

**Note for schools:** *The act does not require schools and special classes providing for a category or categories of special educational needs to change their current status. The current arrangements in relation to the category or categories of special educational needs provided by schools will continue as in previous years unless otherwise directed by the NCSE or the Department.*

#### **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(s)/guardian(s) 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 and support for the code by the student.
- c) Failure to complete application form in full
- d) Information provided on the application form has been found to be false

The special class attached to Gort Community School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 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.

Applicants applying for a place in the special class must submit with their application a copy of an educational/clinical psychologist report or psychiatrist report that clearly specifies a diagnosis of Autism and recommends the student as suitable/eligible for a placement in an ASD Classroom. In addition, a report should be submitted by the applicants SENO.

Applicants applying for a place in the special class when the class is oversubscribed will not be offered a place in mainstream classes. Transfer applications from mainstream classes to the special class are treated as a new application as per section 15 below.

## **6. Oversubscription** *(this section must be completed by all schools including schools that do not anticipate being oversubscribed)*

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

- 1 Attain the required age of twelve by 1st January in the calendar year following his/her entry into first-year;
- 2 Have siblings currently enrolled in the school;
- 3 Children of current staff;
- 4 To be living within 15 km of the school and be from feeder schools in order of priority
  - Gort NS, Gaelscoil Na Bhfili, Kiltartan NS, Labane NS, Ballyglass NS, Ballyturn NS, Boston NS, Kilbeacanty NS, Lough Cutra NS, St Anne's NS (Lurga) , St Thomas NS (Peterswell)  
Tierneevan NS, Tubber NS, Dromindoora NS, St Josephs (Kinvara), Kiltiernan NS, Crusheen NS, Kilcolgan Educate Together, Doorus NS, Northampton NS, Killeeneen NS, New Quay NS, Flagmount NS, Kilchreest NS, Ballinderreen NS, Clarinbridge NS, Carron NS, Barefield NS, Ruan NS
- 5 Have signed written acceptance of the schools Code of Good School Behaviour.

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:

- The student in full time residence with the Eircode nearest the school will be offered the place *(evidence of residing at the Eircode provided will require submission to the school prior to an offer being made e.g. copy of utility bill dated within six months prior to application in the parent(s)/guardian(s) name(s))*.
- Remaining applicants will be put on a waiting list.

## **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 the special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and/or
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;

- (e) a requirement that student, or his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of administration;
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school (with the exception of 6.2 of this admissions policy)
- (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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31st January 2025 only).

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Gort Community School will be based on the following:

- Our school's Admission Policy
- The school's Annual Admission Notice (where applicable)
- 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 15](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 16](#) 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 Gort Community School the applicant must indicate:

(i) whether or not he/she has accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If he/she has accepted such an offer, he/she must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) whether or not he/she has applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, he/she must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

## **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 Gort Community School 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 he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with and support for 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.

## **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 certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

## **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 Gort Community School 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 Gort Community School 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 by 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 the school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

## **15. Procedures for admission of students to year groups other than first year intake groups, and during the school year**

Applicants submitting an application to transfer from any post primary school to any year group in Gort Community School must:

- Meet all criteria as per sections 5 above;



Applicants submitting an application to transfer from any post primary school to the special class in Gort Community School must:

- Meet all the criteria as per sections 4 and 5 above
- The application is also:
  - subject to the waiting list (determined by date/time application is received)
  - and availability of a place in the special class
  - Applications from students enrolled in mainstream classes in Gort Community School requesting transfer to the special class will be treated as a new application (determined by date/time the new application is received) and must again meet all criteria as per sections 4 and 5 above

NB: An application can only be made by parent(s): 'Parent' has the same meaning as in the Education Act 1998 and includes a foster parent and a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997.

All transfer students once enrolled will meet with Year Head, Chaplain or Guidance Councillor to support the transition of school transfer.

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

The Board of Gort Community School or any persons acting on its behalf will not 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.

**Note:** Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

## **17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

Gort Community School offers religious education in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, religious education supports the 'multi-denominational' aspect of our school's ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between 'religious education' and 'religious instruction':

- Religious education is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
- Religious instruction is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

## 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/guardian 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 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.