



Admissions Policy

Introduction

Dominican College Wicklow is a voluntary, girls-only, second-level school, with a Catholic Dominican ethos and is under the trusteeship of Le Chéile. It was founded by the Dominican sisters in 1870.

The Dominican motto 'TRUTH' is the inspiration of our work. Dominican education is concerned with the education of the whole person. Strong emphasis is placed on each student attaining her full potential academically, but care is also taken to ensure that each student benefits from an enriching all round education. In an atmosphere of trust and friendliness students are encouraged to develop responsibility, initiative, personal growth and leadership so as to help them take their place in society as mature and committed Christians.

As trustees of Dominican College Wicklow, Le Chéile is committed to the successful implementation of the Education legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998), the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Equal Status Acts (2000 - 2015), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), the Disability Act (2005), the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (2007) and the Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016. Having regard to the resources available and provided by the Department of Education and Skills, and subject to the safety, well-being and the common good (as determined by the Board of Management) of students and staff, the school is committed to the principles of:

- Inclusiveness
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment in the school
- Respect for diversity of values, belief, traditions, languages and ways of life in Irish society
- Any directions which may issue from the Minister for Education & Skills
- The constitutional rights of persons, while having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school

The central purpose of the school community is moral, intellectual, physical, spiritual and social education of the student. This community seeks to create the atmosphere of Christian care and concern in which the student can grow to maturity.

The purpose of this document is to describe the school's Admissions policy and procedure. Administration of this policy and procedure is delegated by the Board of Management to the Principal of the school. This policy is devised in consultation between the Patron (Le Chéile), Board of Management, Senior Management, Parents, Students and Staff of Dominican College Wicklow.

In accepting a place in Dominican College Wicklow an applicant and her parents/guardians are deemed to accept the following:

- The school's Catholic / Dominican ethos / characteristic spirit.
- The school's academic curriculum, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The school's policies, including the school's Code of Behaviour.



Information on all of the above is available on the school's website www.dominicanwicklow.net

Admissions Statement

The Board of Management of Dominican College Wicklow strives to ensure that the school is inclusive in its intake and participation. The school will not discriminate on the grounds that a student has a special educational need. The school fully respects the Equal Status Acts (2000 – 2015) and will not discriminate on the grounds of the Acts as follows:

Civil status, family status, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, race and/or membership of the Traveller community, with the qualifying exceptions relating to age, gender and religion if deemed necessary to uphold the characteristic spirit of the school. Section 7(3) of the Equal Status Act (2000-2004) clarifies that is not discriminatory for a school to be a single-sex establishment. Section 7(3)(c) provides that denominational education does not amount to discriminatory behaviour for the purposes of the act. Nevertheless, the school has a long tradition of being inclusive and welcoming of diversity and we aspire to continue this inclusive school culture. The Admissions policy is published with the approval of Le Chéile.

Programmes

The school operates within the context of Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes as set out in the Education Act (1998). The school operates within the religious and educational philosophy of the Dominican Sisters and funding and resources made available to it.

Funding

Dominican College is grant-aided by the Department of Education and Skills. In addition it receives extra funds from various fundraising activities and from a voluntary contribution from parents / guardians. A voluntary administrative contribution is also requested from parents/guardians to help towards school administration costs. Specific funding for a small number of ethos-related projects may be granted through the Dominican Ministry Fund.

The school operates within the regulations laid down from time to time by the Department of Education and Skills, and follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

Pre-Enrolment Requirements

Dominican College Wicklow welcomes applications from everyone, subject to the following two overriding requirements:

(i) Age

Applicants must be at least 11 years of age on 1st January of the year in which they wish to enter the school. The maximum age of any student in the school shall not exceed 20 on 1st January of the year in which they are enrolled in 6th Year

(ii) Gender

Dominican College Wicklow is a girls-only school.



Eligibility of Students for First Year Admission

- Post-Primary students must be 12 years of age on 1st January in the calendar year following the student's entry into First Year, as per Department of Education and Skills rules
- At the time of the selection process prospective students must be female
- Parents/guardians of prospective students applying to Dominican College Wicklow must supply a Birth Certificate (and Adoption Certificate, if relevant)
- Prospective students who are in sixth class in primary school or its recognised equivalent
- Prospective students who, along with their parents/guardians, are willing to accept the Catholic Ethos of Dominican College Wicklow
- Prospective students who, along with their parents/guardians, are willing to accept the school's Policies, Procedures and Code of Behaviour
- Those who are committed to completing Transition Year as a compulsory programme of the school
- Those who have submitted fully, and accurately completed the Application Form and attached the required details by the closing date stated on the form
- Those who are willing to take an Assessment Test - All applicants are requested to sit the school's Assessment test on a day, time and date determined by the school

Enrolment Procedures for students entering First Year

Open Night for intending students and their parents will be held in October each year and all 5th and 6th class pupils & their parents/guardians in the locality are invited in advance as a pre-enrolment procedure. This date may vary with due notification. Open Night is also advertised in the local media, on the school website and on social media. It is recommended that parents/guardians wishing to enrol their daughter in Dominican College Wicklow should attend the Open Night with their daughter.

The maximum number of places available in First Year is currently ninety, as determined by the Board of Management and subject to resources and restrictions of space.

Application forms for entry to the school are available to download from the school's website (www.dominicanwicklow.net) or on request from the school's Administration office. Applications are only accepted by way of the school's official application form.

In order to apply for enrolment as a First Year student in Dominican College Wicklow, an application must be made by the parent/guardian by completing the application, registration and health information forms. Applications should be signed and dated and returned to the school Principal with an original birth certificate (and certificate of adoption, if relevant).

When the school receives the above documentation the applicant's name and the Date of Receipt are placed on the list of candidates seeking places at the start of First Year in the year specified on the application form. The school will return the documentation to parents/guardians, along with an acknowledgment of the receipt of the application form.



In order for the application to be valid it must be received by the due date as indicated each year. Applications received after this date will be put on a waiting list until all valid applications are processed.

The list of applicants is placed in order of priority. Applicants in the priority categories listed below are placed on the list first, in the order indicated below, and other applicants are then placed on the list. Within each priority category, and in the remainder of the list, applicants are placed in order of Date of Receipt, earliest first.

Those intending to enrol must read and agree to the school's Code of Behaviour. Written confirmation of parents'/guardians' agreement to the school's Code of Behaviour must be received by the school in the student's Homework Journal.

Enrolment Notification

Decisions made in relation to admissions are made by the Board of Management in accordance with school policy. Except in very exceptional circumstances decisions regarding enrolment will be notified to parents within 21 days of the closing date for applications. Decisions on late applications will be issued within 21 days of receipt of application.

To ensure a place, parents/guardians must notify the school of their acceptance of a place within 14 days of being accepted.

Excess Applications

Dominican College is a Catholic School, for girls only, and is inclusive in its intake of students but reserves the entitlement to give priority to Catholic children in accordance with Section 7.13 of the Equal Status Act (2000). Parents must state that they are prepared to support the religious ethos of the school.

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

- (i) sisters of current students of Dominican College Wicklow where 'current student' is defined to include one who is, at the time of the selection process, enrolled and offered a place but not yet attending the school;
- (ii) girls who are pupils at Holy Rosary national school, on the Dominican Campus, on 1st September in the year the place is being offered;
- (iii) daughters of current staff, both teaching and ancillary staff: 'current' is defined as a member of staff on 1st September in the year the place is being offered who has been a member of staff for at least one academic year prior to that date and who are reasonably expected to be employed by the school at the time their daughter commences Secondary School;
- (iv) sisters of past pupils of Dominican College Wicklow, where 'past pupil' is defined as one who has completed at least one academic year in the school;
- (v) daughters of past pupils of Dominican College Wicklow;
- (vi) female students from schools in the catchment's area – on a lottery basis if necessary,
- (vii) open lottery of all remaining excess female applicants.



The school may not consider any other criteria than those contained in the Admissions Policy in determining whether or not a student is admitted to the school.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to inform the school in writing on or before the closing date for receipt of applications in September in the year one year prior to the proposed year of entry that their daughter falls into one of the above categories, and, in the case of categories (iv) and (v), to specify the years of attendance of the sister(s)/parent/guardian at the secondary school of Dominican College Wicklow.

In the event that 90 offers of places in First Year have been accepted, a Waiting List of a maximum of 50 names will be created. The names of any applicants who were included in a priority category but did not receive an offer are placed on the Waiting List first, in the order in which they appeared on the list of applicants. The names of other applicants who did not receive an offer are then placed on the Waiting List, in the order in which they appeared on the list of applicants, until the Waiting List has a maximum of 50 names. The parents/guardians of each applicant whose name has been placed on the Waiting List are informed by the Principal of the applicant's place on that list. If any place accepted for the start of First Year is not taken up, or if in exceptional circumstances the school refuses to enrol an applicant who has accepted an offer of a place, that place is offered to the first applicant on the Waiting List, and so on until the place is accepted. The Waiting List ceases to operate on 30th September after the start of First Year.

Accepting an offer of a Place

An offer of a place in Dominican College Wicklow is accompanied by an Acceptance Form which specifies the date by which the offer must be accepted, and the amount of a non-refundable administrative contribution to First Year expenses that are not funded by the Department of Education and Skills. In order to secure the place offered (subject to the school's right to refuse enrolment) parents/guardians must ensure that the fully completed Acceptance Form and the non-refundable administrative contribution are received by the school on or before the Acceptance Date. If the school does not receive the completed Acceptance Form on or before the Acceptance Date the offer of a place is deemed to have been declined. It may not be possible to accept completed after the Acceptance Date.

Declining an offer of a Place

Parents/guardians may apply to more than one second-level school for a place for their daughter. Parents/guardians who no longer seek a place, or who no longer wish to take up a place that has been offered and accepted, are asked to inform the school in writing as soon as possible.

Assessment

The school operates a policy of mixed-ability classes. In order to ensure that this is adhered to accurately, an assessment test (currently CAT4 Cognitive Ability Test) will take place for all students in February / March of year of autumn entry to Dominican College. It is not a



means of selection of entrants as students will have been allocated places prior to the assessment test taking place.

It is, in addition, a method of ascertaining the requirement of resources for children with special needs that may not have been identified previously so that an application for these resources can be made to the Department of Education and Skills in advance, thus making them available to the students at earliest possible time (see below).

Special Needs

The Board of Management of Dominican College welcomes students with special educational needs. In order to assess the needs of those students the school will access the students' records from primary school well in advance of entry into the school. This may involve requesting a copy of the student's medical / psychological report(s), if available, as well as her individual education plan (Personalised Pupil Plan) and individual education report. The school may deem it necessary to request immediate assessment in order to assist it in establishing educational and training needs of the student relevant to her special needs and to profile the support services required. This will require parental permission. Since it may take some time for the Department of Education and Skills to process applications for resources for a student with special needs, parents are strongly advised to inform the Principal as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of making formal application.

Having gathered all the relevant information, the Board of Management will assess how these needs can be met. The school will also meet with the parents/guardians to discuss the applicant's needs and the school's capabilities to meet those needs. If further resources are required the Department of Education and Skills will be requested to provide the necessary assistance e.g. special needs assistant, specialised equipment, transport etc.

The Board of Management will do all it possibly can to identify, plan and provide for the needs of a student with a special need or a student who has a disability and seeking admission to the school.

??[The school reserves the right to defer the enrolment of an applicant who has accepted an offer of a place in the school where the applicant has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education & Skills, the school cannot meet those needs and/or provide the candidate with an appropriate education]??.

Transfers

Female students may transfer to Dominican College at any time from another post-primary school, subject to the school's Admissions Policy. However, the school must be satisfied with the reasons for the transfer and to this end information will be requested by the Principal from the student's former school(s) concerning attendance, educational progress, school reports, disabilities and special needs in accordance with Section 20 of the Educational Welfare Act (2000). Parents/guardians who request a place for their daughter(s) in the school, and who complete & return on time the Application Form and provide the necessary documentation (Transfer Form, Birth Certificate, Adoption Form if relevant), will be required to meet with the Principal. The prospective student will also be required to meet with the Principal in advance of any decision to admit that student. The Principal must be satisfied that her proposed transfer to the school shall 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 student seeking a place and the likely impact on students already in the school and the operation of the school in general. A decision about the transfer of the student shall be made by the Principal and parents/guardians will be notified in writing within 21 days of the interview, subject to all the required data having been received by the Principal.

No application from a student transferred from another school will be entertained unless the necessary resources are made available by the Department of Education and Skills or other agencies prior to transfer.

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

As per DES circular 56/2011 the school will request information from feeder-primary schools regarding students' reports, in particular results of standardised tests. The student's Education Passport documentation (see NCCA template materials on www.ncca.ie) will also be requested from primary schools of students once enrolled, to support the transfer of student information from primary to post primary school. Requests for such information may also be made to schools when students are transferring to DCW.

Religious Instruction

Religious Education is a core subject in Dominican College Wicklow and it is expected that all students attend Religious Education class in order to fulfil our requirements to help develop well-rounded, responsible members of society, and support students' spiritual and moral development. The NCCA State syllabus for Religious Education is taught at Junior Cycle and students sit the Religious Education examination as part of their Junior Certificate, and the school follows the NCCA Senior Cycle curriculum guidelines for Religious Education which in which they do not sit a Leaving Certificate examination. We encourage and expect all students to engage in Religious Education in order to help ensure they leave school with a mature, informed and balanced respect for religious traditions and worldviews. Parents/guardians have a right to withdraw their daughter from religious instruction under Article 44.4. of the Constitution and under Section 30(2)(e) of the Education Act (1998): The Minister 'shall not require any student to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student.'

Arrangements for supervision of such students are as follows: the student must be supervised by an adult at all times, and will normally therefore remain in the R.E. class and be assigned work to do which is in keeping with the school's requirement to promote the moral and spiritual development of students. Where this is not acceptable to a parent, he/she may undertake in writing to the Principal, to arrange to supervise his/her daughter off-site for the duration of the R.E. class for each day on which it is timetabled, and ensure that the student is returned promptly for her following class.



Right to Refuse Enrolment

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application for admission in exceptional circumstances. The school will enrol all applicants other than in the following four cases:

1. Where the school is oversubscribed
2. Where the parents/guardians of a student refuse to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is agreeable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such codes by the student
3. The school is a single-gender school where it refuses to admit a student who is not of that gender
4. In very exceptional cases, where a student who is not of the Catholic denomination and refusal to enrol is deemed to be essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Such refusal to enrol circumstances could arise where, in the opinion of the Board of Management, the applicant would pose an unacceptable risk to other students, to the school staff or to school property, or would interfere significantly with the educational rights of other students in the school. Where an applicant has attended another second level school, the school reserves the right to require, in advance of making an enrolment decision, full disclosure of the circumstances surrounding the departure of the applicant from that other school, and the permission of the applicant's parents/guardians to request information relevant to the enrolment decision from that other school. 'The Board of Management of a recognised school shall not refuse to admit as a student in such school a child in respect of whom an application to be so admitted has been made, except where such refusal is in accordance with the policy of the recognised school concerned published under Section 15(2)(d) of the Act of 1998' (*Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 19(1)*)

Appeals

Parents/guardians of an applicant have a right to appeal any enrolment decision to the school's Board of Management. A refusal to enrol an applicant will be in accordance with Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998.

Parents have the right to appeal a refusal by a school to enrol a student under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998). This section of the Act also affords parents/guardians a separate right to appeal a refusal by a school to enrol an applicant to the Department of Education and Skills. Any such appeal must be made within 42 calendar days of the date on which the school's refusal is notified to the parents/guardians. Appeals should be made in the first instance to the Board of Management of the College. The letter of Appeal to the Board of Management must be received by the school within 14 days of the date of the letter of refusal to enrol.

The Board of Management reserves the right to amend this policy, whether in response to legislative requirements or otherwise.



Data Protection

The school's Data Protection Policy is available on www.dominicanwicklow.net. Parents/guardians and prospective students should read this policy carefully. When parents/guardians apply to have their daughter enrolled they will be asked to sign consent to their data /the child's data being collected, processed and used in accordance with this Data Protection Policy during the course of their time as a student in Dominican College Wicklow. Where the student is over 18 years old, they will be asked to sign their consent to this (see DES Circular letter 0047/2010).

Checklist

When applying for admission to Dominican College please ensure that you have read the following documents carefully:

- Admissions Policy
- School Code of Behaviour
- Dominican College Prospectus
- Other school policies, as available on www.dominicanwicklow.net

When applying for admission please make sure you complete and return the following:

- Application and Emergency information forms
- Original Birth Certificate (to be copied and returned by post)
- Certificate of Adoption, if relevant
(A registration form will subsequently be required when a place has been offered.)

Communication

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that the school is made aware of any changes in address or in any other details included in an application form. All correspondence will issue to the address appearing on the application form or otherwise notified in writing to the school.

Reviewed and Ratified by the Board of Management on*(check p.6 before final ratification and ensure Patron approves policy)*

For Review: May 2018 or sooner.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of the Board of Management