

ENROLMENT POLICY

The Enrolment Policy of Columba College is rooted in the principles of equity and equality set out in the Constitution of Ireland and in the education and equality legislation of:

The Vocational Education Acts 1930 – 2001

The Education Act 1998

The Education Welfare Act 2000

The Equal Status Act 2000

The Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004.

1.1 Enrolment of Students transferring from Primary Education

Completed application forms must be submitted within “the enrolment period” which is the period of four weeks succeeding the Open Day/Night each year.

Enrolments will be accepted from:

- (i) All new entrants to first year who reside within the catchment area of the school
- (ii) New entrants to first year who are the siblings or step-siblings of existing pupils in the school
- (iii) New entrants to first year who reside outside the established catchment area subject to the available places in the school.

Where it is anticipated that the school will not be able to physically accommodate all the new entrants to first year who enrol during the enrolment period those applicants from outside the established catchment will be advised that their application is being accepted on the condition that sufficient places/accommodation will be made available.

Where the number of such applicants exceeds the number of available places the students to whom confirmed places will be offered will be decided by lottery to be conducted by the CEO of the Vocational Education Committee or his nominee.

New entrants to first year **who enrol after the enrolment period and prior to the commencement of the school term** in August/September each year will be accepted on a “first come, first served” basis subject to the availability of places.

Once the school term has commenced, all applications for enrolment will be dealt with under the policy relating to transferring students as set out hereunder.

1.2 Enrolment of Students Transferring from Another School

While it is appreciated that in certain exceptional circumstances transfers are unavoidable (eg. A change of residence or a family moving into the area) as a matter of general policy transfers into the school are discouraged in the overall interests of the continuity of the student’s education.

An **application to transfer** is defined as one from a student who has previously enrolled in another school in or outside the catchment area or from a student who makes application after the commencement of the Autumn school term.

Applications to transfer into the school will be considered having regard to the overall well being of existing pupils and the availability of physical space and resources, following consideration by the Board of Management of individual applications to transfer into the school, and where the Board has good grounds for forming the fair and reasonable opinion that it would not be in the best interests of the existing students to accept such a transfer it is the policy of the school to refuse to enrol such applicants.

An application for enrolment must be submitted accompanied by the following:

- (i) Two most recent reports from the pupil's previous school.
- (ii) A written reference from the previous school together with two additional written character references, dated within one month of the date of application, from the Leader or Official of a local Youth Club/Sports Club or similar organisation and /or a member of the Garda Siochana or a person of standing in the community.

Applications will not be accepted from students who are the subject of ongoing disciplinary proceedings in another school which includes any ongoing statutory appeals procedures in accordance with the Education Act 1998 or the Education for persons with Special Needs Act 2004.

1.3 Enrolment of Students with Special Education Needs

An application for enrolment must be submitted in accordance with the requirements outlined above and the following:

- (i) All relevant information regarding the applicant's special needs must be supplied with the application.
- (ii) Reports regarding any assessments relating to the student's educational needs which have been carried out by the previous school or other professional persons must be provided.

Having regard to the policy of the school to address the educational and developmental requirements of pupils with special educational needs it is the considered view and experience of the staff and management of the school that it is often necessary to

provide particular supports to pupils with special educational needs.

Such support can be considerably enhanced by providing family support and a sense of a caring community within the school. It is the view of the school that it is, in general, not good practice to enrol a student with special educational needs in one school and his or her siblings in another school as this separation from siblings and the perceived removal of a family support can often have a negative impact on the pupil with special educational needs.

To address this issue in a positive way it is the policy of this school to require families to contribute to this support structure by enrolling the siblings of pupils with special educational needs in the same school. Where the parents/guardians of an applicant student with Special Educational Needs cannot show good grounds for the Board of Management for waiving this requirement, it is the policy of the school to refuse to enrol the applicant student.