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| **Admissions Policy** |  |
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1. Introduction

Stella Maris School Company Limited by Guarantee is an independent classical school in Limerick, Ireland. Stella Maris School is supported by a combination of donations, voluntary contributions and philanthropy. The school is an independent and private education institution.

The Irish Constitution acknowledges the role of a parent or guardian as the primary educator of the child. Stella Maris School is a non-recognised school under Section 14 (1) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000[[1]](#footnote-1) which enables parents or guardians to independently choose an education for their child in a school which is not funded by the Department of Education and Skills.

The Board of Management of Stella Maris School hereby sets out its Enrolment Policy in order to inform parents/guardians in relation to enrolment matters. This Policy may be amended and updated from time to time by the Board of Management.

1. Ethos and Identity of Stella Maris School

Stella Maris School’s mission and teaching philosophy are guided by the Catholic Church’s Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, which sets out the fundamental principles of a comprehensive, religiously-informed education:

"The Church is bound as a mother to give to these children of hers an education by which their whole life can be imbued with the spirit of Christ and at the same time do all she can to promote the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human."[[2]](#footnote-2)

In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI wrote:

“The term “education” refers not only to classroom teaching and vocational training — both of which are important factors in development — but to the complete formation of the person. In this regard, there is a problem that should be highlighted: in order to educate, it is necessary to know the nature of the human person, to know who he or she is.”

These are foundations upon which Stella Maris School provides a classical type of education, addressed to the integral human person (see Curriculum, Section 3).

Stella Maris School fully supports the principles of:

1. Respect for the values, traditions, diversity and ways of life that support the flourishing of the human person and of the common good, in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
2. Parental autonomy in the education of their children, subject to equality of access and participation in an independent classical school;
3. Inclusiveness in terms of access to the classical curriculum, and including in relation to children with a disability or other special educational needs;
4. Equality of opportunity for students who support the above principles.
5. Curriculum

At Stella Maris School, we will first lay down the foundations for children to learn to think. Our ambition is to give them the tools of learning. They will learn to observe the reality around them, and to reason. The knowledge they will acquire will naturally be added to a structured understanding of God’s Creation.

Concretely, this approach will start by strongly embedding the two foundational subjects taught in primary school: mathematics and English language. Both will follow the traditional, tried and tested tryptic approach of “to-say, to-do, to-write”. Children say what they see, they touch the objects relating to what they say, and they write it. Mathematics is the language of God, and English is the primary language of this country. Both mathematics and language are essential for the construction of a child’s mind, as the deep foundations upon which to build Faith and Reason. In order to support these structures, Stella Maris School will teach Latin, which brings both strong grammar and an introduction to the classical Roman culture, itself the cradle of Europe’s Christendom.

On those two bases, then, the essential cultural elements are brought in: History, Geography, Music, Literature, Art and Drama. These discrete areas are not only taught to children in a linear way, but are an opportunity to start learning the art of argumentation.

The Irish language, and Irish culture then, are the jewels on the crown. Because Ireland needs to take seriously its Catholic revival, the rediscovery of Irish as a language and as a culture will be done from the stronghold of a classically educated mind, through Mathematics, a rich and educated mastery of the English language, History, Geography, Art, Music and Drama. School tours will be organised on a regular basis to historical and cultural sites.

1. Religious Identity of Stella Maris School

Stella Maris School is an independent primary school that seeks to provide authentic Christ-centered formation in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, in the context of academic excellence.

Parents, guardians and children undertake, upon admission, to fully commit to the ethos of the school (see above Section 2).

All admitted students will demonstrate a commitment to uphold the ethos of Stella Maris School through active participation in all of the school’s teaching and learning activities.

Religious education and formation is at the core of classical education for all year groups and is an integral part of the ethos of Stella Maris School. It is, therefore, a requirement of Stella Maris School that students attend religious education classes in the Catholic tradition. Students are also expected to attend liturgical celebrations and daily prayer.

1. Co-educational School

Stella Maris School welcomes both boys and girls to its programme.

1. Voluntary Contributions

Stella Maris School is not a fee-paying school. Voluntary financial contributions from parents and guardians form an important support for the running of the school. However, such contributions are optional and no child is refused admission to Stella Maris School on financial grounds.

1. Enrolment Procedures for Entry
   1. General Criteria for Application for Enrolment

The general criteria for application for enrolment include that the student:

1. has, or will have, reached 4 years of age.
2. accepts, embraces and undertakes to follow the school ethos and religious identity;

Furthermore, if the student is offered a place in the school, his or her parents/guardians must confirm in writing that they accept Stella Maris School’s Ethos, Code of Behaviour/Discipline and relevant school policies and that they shall comply with legislation which permits for the transfer of information from their previous primary school.

* 1. Students with Special Education Needs

Stella Maris School welcomes applications from students with special educational needs unless the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with either the best interests of the student concerned or the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated.

While recognising and fully supporting parents' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the school’s ability to accept students with particular special needs is dependent on the availability of resources suitable to meet those needs for the individual student, being available to the school. As an Independent school which does not receive any State-financial support, Stella Maris School may need to acknowledge that, in certain circumstances, the Board cannot guarantee the same standard of educational excellence and faith formation to students with particular educational needs. Therefore, any offer of a place in Stella Maris School is dependent on the ability of the Board of Management to meet the specific needs of each student.

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 are requested to outline the details of a child's special educational needs on the Registration Form.

Stella Maris School, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, shall assess if and how the needs of these students can be met by the school.

* 1. Applications

Application for enrolment can be made in writing by using Stella Maris School’s enrolment application form. Details are available on Stella Maris School’s website;

[www.stellamarisprimaryschool.com](http://www.stellamarisprimaryschool.com/)

It is important that all of the sought details and documents are supplied with the application form. Parents may submit information in addition to that required by the school’s enrolment application form.

7.4 Time Frame for Applications

Written application using Stella Maris School’s enrolment application form for enrolment to the school, should reach the school by the specified date in the year before the child starts in the school.

This information will be published annually on the Stella Maris School website; it will normally be by the first day of September of each year.

No priority is given to those who apply earlier than others (in other words, a ‘first-come/first-served’ policy does not apply to enrolment applications).

**Interview Process**

The Board of Management reserves the right to meet all applicants and/or their parents / guardians to clarify the educational needs of the child or the applicant’s commitment to the ethos and identity of Stella Maris School.

1. Selection Process

The Board of Management shall determine the maximum number of school places to be offered each year. Having regard to the Catholic identity of Stella Maris School and without prejudice to the following, the Board of Management reserves the right to offer a place to a boy(s) or girl(s) irrespective of their family’s financial circumstances.

The decision to award any place at Stella Maris School will be based on an objective assessment by the Board of Management.

Parents / guardians should note that;

(a) There is no automatic right of enrolment in Stella Maris School for any applicant and Stella Maris School allocates places in accordance with this policy and relevant legislation in relation to all applications.

(b) When the number of enrolment applications exceeds the number of places available, places will be offered in the order of priority set out as follows;

**First allocation of places**

Brothers or sisters of current Stella Maris School students; children of the Board of Management; children of full-time staff members; brothers or sisters of past pupils of Stella Maris School.

**Allocation of remaining places**

When all of the above priority categories have been dealt with, the remaining applications are allocated. Each applicant is assessed by the Board on an individual basis in light of the student’s suitability and commitment to upholding the ethos and identity of Stella Maris School.

**Waiting List**

Applicants who have not been offered a place under the foregoing criteria will be placed on a waiting list.

The waiting list remains in operation only until 31st August immediately following the creation of that waiting list.

Should places become available these will be offered in order of place on the waiting list.

1. Confirmation of Acceptance of Offer of Enrolment

Applicants who are being offered places will be invited, within 7 days, to;

1. confirm, in writing, acceptance or otherwise of the posting of the offer; and
2. submit completed registration form (available on the Stella Maris School Website) in which the following should be stated:
3. religion – it is a condition of admission that parents/guardians of children enrolling accept the Ethos and Identity of Stella Maris School (see above Section 2).
4. medical - details of any medical condition which the school should be aware of shall be stated clearly.
5. family circumstances - Relevant information concerning family circumstances impacting negatively on a pupil should be disclosed to the principal. It will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

(c) The following should accompany the Registration form;

(i) Signed confirmations that the applicant and his parents/guardians agree to respect the ethos and identity of the school and adhere to Stella Maris School’s Code of Behaviour, school policies and shall comply with legislation which permits for the transfer of information from primary schools.

(ii) Where applicable, a copy of previously undertaken psychological and/or medical assessments/reports, as appropriate, should accompany the Registration Form. As regards individuals with specific disability or special needs, the parent(s) / guardian(s) may be requested to provide other information (including, where necessary, from professional assessment) to assist Stella Maris School in establishing the educational and training needs of their child and to profile the support services required to enable Management assess how best the school could meet his or her needs. In such cases, the school will meet with the parents to discuss the child’s needs.

Failure to comply with any aspect of the above will result in the enrolment offer being withdrawn.

(d) Parents / guardians of applicants who have accepted places will be invited to a meeting before the end of that school year, the purpose of which is to provide all relevant information regarding their child’s induction into the school.

1. Induction

All new entrants to Stella Maris School are (unless exceptional circumstances so prevent) expected to attend an Induction Programme at the commencement of the academic year.

1. Enrolment Application Procedures for children transferring from other schools

Children transferring from another school shall provide the following additional information:

1. a letter of reference from the previous school,
2. details of previous school(s) attended;
3. the reason(s) for leaving that (those) school(s), and
4. copies of all the student’s records from that (those) school(s).

The Board of Management will decide on applications by applying the following criteria:

(a) The Board of Management must be satisfied that it can discharge its duty to provide an appropriate and authentic classical education for every student.

(b) There shall, in the Board of Management’s sole opinion, be a minimal disruption to existing students.

(c) There is a vacancy within Stella Maris School in the relevant class in respect of which entry is sought.

(d) The application is in line with the Stella Maris School’s Admission Policy;

(e) That the transfer to Stella Maris School is, on the recommendation of the principal:

(i) in the best interest of the student;

(ii) of educational benefit to the student;

To assist in their decision as regards such criteria, the Board of Management may seek the permission of the applicant’s parents / guardians or the applicant to consult with the management of former schools attended by the applicant and / or consult with the relevant Educational Welfare Officer or relevant State agency, as appropriate.

1. Protocol in the event of refusal

Parents and guardians should note that as an independent and non-registered school under Section 14 (1) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 does not apply.

In the event that an application is turned down, parents/guardians may request the Board to reconsider its decision. The Board shall seek advice on the matter from an independent third party.

1. Adoption by the Board

This Admission Policy was approved and adopted by the Board of Management of Stella Maris School on the date below.

Signed: \_\_\_ Teresa Leahy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_/6/25\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: \_\_Canon Henry\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_ /6/25\_\_\_

Principal

Date of next review: 19/6/26

1. https://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/home-education-and-attending-non-recognised-schools/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\_councils/ii\_vatican\_council/documents/vat-ii\_decl\_19651028\_gravissimum-educationis\_en.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)