

Produced by the Board of Management for the purpose of consultation with:

The patron of Sligo Grammar School, the parents of students attending Sligo Grammar School, and Staff of Sligo Grammar School, as required under section 62(1) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

Period of consultation: During the week of 22 April, 2020 to 29 April, 2020, parents of current students and members of staff may wish to forward observations/comments regarding this draft.

Observations and comments should be forwarded by email only to:
policy.draft@sligogrammarschool.org.

The name and contact number of the person should be included in the email for the purposes of authentication and clarification should this be required.

Draft Admission Policy of:

**Sligo Grammar School
The Mall
Sligo
Roll Number: 65190W**

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 of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on [date]. 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 Sligo Grammar 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

Sligo Grammar School is a Church of Ireland co-educational post- primary school with a Church of Ireland and Anglican ethos, under the patronage of the Incorporated Society for the promotion of Protestant Schools.

“Church of Ireland/Anglican” ethos, in the context of a Church of Ireland post-primary school, means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Anglican Christian tradition. This seeks to nurture and encourage the formation of the intellectual, academic, sporting, social and religious abilities of each child within the framework of the community of faith. A Church of Ireland ethos encourages intellectual diversity of thought, and encourages the individual to seek to understand themselves, the world around them and the connection between the world and the Divine. This understanding of school ethos promotes pluralism in thought and living, in the context of a Christian school community.

Drawing on its Anglican tradition, the Church of Ireland School encourages home/family involvement, highlighting the importance of the family/home in the social and emotional development of the child, and more broadly, the community of the school and church.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Sligo Grammar School 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

Sligo Grammar School aims to promote excellence in an inclusive and supportive community that reflects Christian values, where each member is enabled to achieve his or her full potential in life and in learning.

ETHOS

The ethos of the school reflects its Church of Ireland background. The Church of Ireland is part of the Anglican tradition. Like any school, Sligo Grammar School values the qualities of learning, justice, individual achievement and wholeness. But its Church of Ireland ethos means that it first of all is a Christian School that operates within and encourages Christian values and faith. The experience of sharing in the life of this community is itself an important part of the Christian education quite apart from the formal content learned in the classroom. Worship is part of the school life and the school has an assembly in the morning, which includes an act of worship. Integral to the school calendar are a Prize Day Service and a Carol Service and a final Valedictory Service for Form 6. The Christian message is taught in RE programs with opportunities given for discussion of moral and spiritual issues and values. Understanding and tolerance of the sincerely held beliefs of those of other traditions is also taught. The aim is to equip the pupils to make informed choices about personal faith for their individual lives.

In keeping with its Anglican background:

1. The school values unity in diversity. The school encourages tolerance and acceptance. It promotes an ethic of care and respect for others. Our identity together is not because we think alike but because we act together and because each individual is valued.

2. The school encourages the use of informed reason. It values academic rigour and diligence whilst remaining open to and encouraging of ideas and debate.

3. The school has a long tradition both as a faith-based school and as a community. It values its religious and social heritage.

4. Anglicanism promotes social responsibility in its service ethic and consequently the school prides itself on its involvement in and contribution to the local community. The pursuit of justice is valued both within the school and the wider world.

5. The school expects an acceptance of personal responsibility. Self discipline and an acceptance of personal responsibility for decisions and actions is cultivated.

We recognise that these values while essentially Anglican are not unique to Anglicanism.

3. Admission Statement

Sligo Grammar 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.

Denominational School

Sligo Grammar School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment, which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of the Church of Ireland/Anglican faith, and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 5. below for further details)
- b) if applying for a residential boarding place; the student's ability to self-regulate, and self-care for the purpose of residing safely in a community setting of their peers, is incompatible

with residential boarding. This is determined at an interview with the student, and parents or guardian, before a place is offered

c) Sligo Grammar School is a denominational school demonstrative of a Church of Ireland/Anglican school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Church of Ireland/Anglican faith, where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the 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 in the order listed below, 1-6. This applies to both applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice (October prior to enrolment year), and to applicants who applied prior to February 1st, 2020, and were placed on a waiting list.

This new Admissions policy (September 2020) allows for applicants that were on a waiting list prior to February 1st, 2020 to receive priority of a place, up to 2025, according to the selection criteria listed below and their date of application, within that criterion.

Attention: Applicants in the October application window will be added to the list of pre-February 1st, 2020 applicants, according to their criterion but selected on a lottery basis, for the remaining places.

Late applicants will only be considered for a place once the initial waiting list of pre-February 1st, 2020 applicants and October window applicants is exhausted, and will be offered by the selection criterion 1-6.

Selection Criteria

1. Children of practicing members of the Church of Ireland, followed by children of practicing members of other mainstream Protestant or Reformed traditions of Christianity, followed by;
2. Children of inter-church families where one parent is a practising member of the Church of Ireland, followed by children of inter-church families where one parent is a practising member of another mainstream Protestant or Reformed tradition of Christianity, followed by;
3. Children of a parent who is employed by the school, followed by;
4. Siblings of present or past students of the school, who completed a full education cycle in the school, followed by;
5. Children/grandchildren of a parent/grandparent who is a past student, provided this category does not exceed 25% of the places offered in Form 1, followed by;
6. Applicants not in selection criteria 1-5:
 - a. Remaining students on the waiting list, that don't meet the selection criteria laid out in 1-5, and applied pre-February 1st, 2020 will be offered a place based on the date they originally applied, followed by;
 - b. Applications received in this selection criterion during the October application window will be entered into a lottery, for the remaining places. An external independent overseer will

determine this process, which will allow us to indicate which position on the list that student will retain.

Selection Criteria 1 and 2

Applicants applying under selection criteria 2 and 3 must provide a signed certificate of religious affiliation, provided by the school, from their qualifying church. The list of qualifying churches, as set out by the SEC, will be included with the admissions notice, issued annually.

Important Date Changes to the existing Admissions Policy

a. Applications from any of the selection criteria 1-6, received post-February 1st, 2020, for any year of entry, will be returned and invited to apply in the October, preceding the year of entry (when the applicant is in 6th class).

b. Applications received pre-February 1st, 2020 for a place in Form 1 in 2026 and beyond will be returned and invited to apply in the October, preceding the year of entry (when the applicant is in 6th Class).

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories from above, who applied during the October application window (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

Selection Criteria Lottery where oversubscribed:

For the Form 1 entry in years 2021 to 2025, applications submitted before 1 February 2020 will be selected by the date of their application.

Names of applications received during the October application window within a selection criteria category, will be entered into a lottery for the remaining places.

Subsequently, if those applicants do not take up the places, the place will then be offered to candidates in the next category according to the same process. An external independent overseer will determine this process, which will allow us to indicate which position on the list that student is.

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 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; other than in relation to a fee charging school;
- c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission; other than in the case of admission to the residential element of a boarding school;
- f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than,
 - i. siblings of a student attending or having attended the school, and/or
 - ii. parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (ii) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria, to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces, as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

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 (received before February 1st, 2020, that apply up until 31st January 2025 only).

7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Sligo Grammar School will be based on the following:

- I. Our school's admission policy,
- II. The school's annual admission notice (where applicable),
- III. 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 13 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 14 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.

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 (see section 17 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Sligo Grammar School, you must indicate—

- i. 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,
- ii. 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.

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 Sligo Grammar 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 Headmaster 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
- iv. an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in section 9 above.

11. 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.

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—

- i. an application for admission to the school has been received,
- ii. an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- iii. an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- i. the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- ii. the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- iii. the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- iv. 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 Sligo Grammar 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 Sligo Grammar 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.

Applicant students whose applications are received after the closing date outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date of receipt of the application.

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 admissions 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 no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Applicant students will be offered a place if a place is available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

14. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year Mid-Stream Applications

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

Applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Applicant students will be offered a place in the relevant class if a place is available. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places in the relevant class, the school will apply the selection criteria set out in Section 6 of this policy to those applications. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

Late Applicants post-commencement of school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students, who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Applicant students 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 student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

15. Charging of fees

The Board of Directors of Sligo Grammar School determines annually the fees for the following;

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school – registration fee
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school – deposit and fees.

Fees and charges are payable as detailed in the Fees and General Conditions Notice published annually. In addition, a deposit is required in advance of allocating a place and is a condition of allocating a place in any school year.

16. 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.

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 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.

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Formal consideration of an application for entry only takes place after the School has received the completed Entrance Form.

Day pupil applicants must also complete the Sligo Grammar School Application Form and list Sligo Grammar School as their first preference. All application forms must be returned prior to the date set annually in accordance with the Admission Policy.

Please note: in the event of an offer of a place being made, a three hundred euro deposit is required to confirm acceptance of the day place. In the event of an offer of a place being made, an eight hundred euro deposit is required to confirm acceptance of the boarding place. This can be done through installments with agreement of the Accounts Department.

This deposit is deducted from the first semester's fees. This deposit is nonrefundable if the acceptance of an offer is withdrawn at a later date.

Sligo Grammar School is a day and boarding school and it is of fundamental importance to maintain the school character and ethos that Boarding places are prioritised. The number of boarders accepted is determined by a number of factors including;

- (a) Optimal use of boarding facilities that contribute to the economic welfare of the School
- (b) Existing number of boarders
- (c) Dormitory size

The number of day pupils accepted is determined by the following factors;

- (a) Number of boarders
- (b) A total of 72 students (combination of day and boarding) are accepted into first year each year and are divided into 3 form groups.

Additional places will be considered in Form 2, form size should not exceed 24 students, Sligo Grammar School does not accept admissions to Form 3; exceptional circumstances may be considered.

- (c) A total of 92 students (combination of day and boarding) may be accepted into each of fourth, fifth and sixth year due to a greater range of subjects available at this level thus ensuring class size is not unduly compromised.