



Admission Policy (Review September 2025)

Admission Policy of Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS

School Address: Johnstown, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

Roll number: 19321B

School Patron: Catholic Archbishop of Dublin

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 24th of September 2025. 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 Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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 online application form for admission is published through Aladdin via the school website www.johnstowngns.ie

More details available office@johnstowngns.ie

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS is a Catholic girls' primary school with three mixed special classes for children with autism, (The Meadow), with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and, which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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.

Our Vision is that of a caring, loving Catholic School where all children whatever their ability, race or creed are cherished for their uniqueness.

Our School seeks to give equal opportunity to all children to reach their full potential – academically, spiritually, physically, socially and emotionally.

We endeavour to achieve this goal in a climate of positive co-operation, supported by the entire school community of pupils, teachers. Support staff, parents/guardians, Board of Management and the local parish community.

In an ever-changing world, we in Our Lady of Good Counsel G.N.S. will endeavour, through the pursuit of excellence and positive learning experiences, to provide an education in a supportive and caring environment, by nurturing a climate of tolerance and acceptance, and a sincere confidence in the beliefs and values of our school ethos. Our hope is to give our pupils roots and then wings.

OUR MISSION: "BE THERE AND CARE"

The staff of Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS seeks actively, through word and action, to create a happy climate of physical, emotional, social and intellectual security for students, staff and parents/guardians. In this way teaching and learning can take place within the context of mutual valuing and respectful relationships.

The teachers of Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS see education not just as providing students with knowledge and skills but also as providing for the rounded development of the individual.

We believe each child has a unique and special contribution to make as an active member of the school community. We believe every child matters.

We strive to develop independence in our students together with the ability to self-evaluate, self-motivate and internalise discipline. We want our students to be happy with themselves, others and their world.

We want our pupils to enjoy school.

We endeavour to achieve quality in all that we do.

These aspirations can only be achieved through the co-operation of students, teachers, support staff, parents/guardians, Board of Management and Parish.

We believe it takes a Community to raise a child.

3. Admission Statement

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Girls National School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs,

including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council. Our Lady of Good Counsel Girls National School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

Single gender schools

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS is designated an all-girls mainstream school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to a mainstream class in this school. Our special classes for pupils with ASD are mixed gender classes.

Schools with Special Education Classes

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS is a school which has established three special classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with the category of ASD as 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 Special Classes

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has three classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism.

Enrolment of Children in the Special Classes for children with Autism

- Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for autism when the following is provided in support of such an application:
- Professional report(s) outlining:
- Diagnosis of Autism DSM IVN or ICD 10/11 (psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)
- AND
- A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports.
- AND
- Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same.
- AND
- A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for Autism.
- The parents/guardians must fill in and return a School Enrolment form as for all pupils. All relevant reports and assessments must be given to the school once the child has been offered a place in the school.
- The Board of Management states that, as per DES instruction, the school will accommodate a maximum of three special classes for children with Autism, to include Junior and Senior classes covering the age range of the primary school.

- The Department of Education & Skills states that the ratio for each class is a maximum six pupils to one teacher and two SNAs. There must be more than three pupils to access the second SNA.
- The Admissions Policy states that the parents/guardians (and the prospective candidates for the class if required) may be invited to meet the principal, the class teacher and any other relevant parties before the child starts school. An Induction meeting of new parents will be held prior to commencement in the school, as with all pupils.
- The classes will be **co-educational** and will cater for children of primary school age only – i.e. four years to thirteen years. Where appropriate, and depending on the individual child, early intervention class 1 placement may be offered to such children until the age of six years on June 30th of the year of exit.
- In accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act a parent/guardian must confirm compliance with the school's Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment if this confirmation is not received prior to the pupil attending the school. The Board also reserves the right to continue to suspend or expel a child under '*Health & Safety*' regulations and in conjunction with the school '*Code of Behaviour*' as per the National Education Welfare document if the need should arise.
- A placement breakdown can sometimes occur. All placements are subject to review at the request of the parents and/ or the school. The review will include input from all agencies involved (through a multi-disciplinary team meeting), the parents/guardians and the school. Following the review a recommendation may be made that the child be enrolled in a school that can better meet his/her needs.
- First preference will be given to pupils attending Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS/BNS schools, Johnstown, where a transfer will take place from mainstream to special classes if criteria have been satisfied.
- Integration will be determined based on the individual needs of the child, and through discussion with the parents/guardians and the relevant class/support teacher. Following agreement, phased integration will take place in both the girls' and boys' schools as appropriate.

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 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 such code by the student.

A school that admits students of one gender only

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS provides education primarily for girls and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school in mainstream classes. **Our special classes are mixed gender.**

All Denominational schools and Single Gender Schools

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a pupil a person who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school

Special education classes

The special classes attached to Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS provide an education exclusively for students with 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.

6. 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 to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice:

Selection Criteria

1. Children living within the catchment area of the parish of Johnstown/Killiney and siblings (including step-siblings and foster siblings resident at same address) of children currently enrolled in the boys' and girls' schools. (**See parish boundary**) Two utility bills must be provided to prove residency status in the parish area. (The eldest child will have priority in this ranking.)
2. **Children of Staff members of both schools.** (the eldest will have priority in this ranking)
3. **Siblings** of past pupils of both schools.
4. **Children of past pupils of the school to a maximum of 25% of available spaces.**
5. All children who apply to the school and are not resident in the parish catchment area of the parish of Johnstown/Killiney. (The eldest child will have priority in this ranking)
6. In the event that there are more applicants within any category than there are available places, priority will be given to children within the particular category in order of date of receipt of application, starting with the eldest. All applications are date stamped upon receipt by the school.

7. All applicants whose names were placed on pre-existing waiting lists (prior to February 1st 2020) who had before that date had confirmation from the school in writing that the name of the pupil had been placed on a waiting list for the allocation on places in the school year concerned will have their applications processed in line with the above criteria. This exception will cease to exist on January 31st 2025.

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:

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS will conduct a lottery. This will be directed by an Independent person in the presence of a teacher and representative of the Parents' Association. In the event of twin siblings being tied for a place, priority will be given to the eldest twin.

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 one of our special classes insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned.
- (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;
- (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, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on
 - (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or
 - (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school;

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, we will 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 (up until 31st January 2025 only).

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 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 Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS, 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.

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 Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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 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.

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).

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 Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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 Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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.

Applicants 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.

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 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. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

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: Applications will be accepted by email or by post. If there is room in the relevant class the pupil will be accepted. If the class is full the pupil's name will be placed on a waiting list for that particular 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:

As above

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

The board of Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

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 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.

This policy was approved by the Patron on Wednesday 24th of September 2025

Signed: 

Frank Keenaghan

Chairperson

Board of Management

Signed: 

Principal

Date: 25/09/2025