

St. Mary's College



Admissions Policy

2023/2024

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St. Mary's College

ADMISSIONS POLICY

The College welcomes boys and girls from all backgrounds. Places are offered to children meeting the criteria necessary to attain, and if possible improve, the Catholic/Christian ethos of the school and its academic and co-curricular standards. In deciding whether to offer a place, the College must also feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop the full potential of the prospective pupil and do so in line with the general standards likely to be achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every prospect he or she will enjoy a complete, happy, and successful school career and emerge a confident and well-rounded young adult. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the College.

The College's policy is to apply these criteria to all pupils and any potential pupils. The College will not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, religion (assuming the candidate and parents agree to adhere to the religious ethos of the College), and disability, national or ethnic origin in its admissions procedures. It is of great importance that a parent informs the College on the application form should a candidate be disabled under the definition in Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 namely that (a) they have a physical or mental impairment, and (b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, and thereby they require additional time or special arrangements for the Entrance Examination.

Admissions Process

Prospective parents can download an application pack from the school website or request a prospectus from the school office. Completed application forms are to be returned to the school office with a copy of the candidate's most recent school report and a registration fee.

The application form is acknowledged in writing.

The College will write to feeder schools requesting references for pupils a few weeks prior to the Entrance Examination, which is normally held in November each year.

The College will write to parents two weeks before the Entrance Examination giving an interview date and time and information about Entrance Examination arrangements.

The assessment will include consideration of information received from the feeder school (applicant's previous school(s)) and any other information considered necessary to ensure the safeguarding of any pupils currently at St. Mary's College.

The outcome of the assessment will be sent to parents up to two weeks after the Entrance Examination. Places must be accepted or rejected within a specified time of the offer. A place can only be accepted on receipt by the College of the signed acceptance form and deposit, which will be refunded in the fees for the term immediately before the pupil's departure from the College.

After the deadline of the acceptance date the College's offer lapses and it can then contact other parents to make further offers.

Admissions Eligibility

Admission to the Senior School is by a combination of entrance examination, entrance interview, and school reference.

The Entrance Examination consists of the following assessments:

- Mathematics
- English
- Cognitive Abilities Test

The College also interviews parents and prospective pupils where the children are asked to read, answer questions and explore their interests etc. The interview lasts 15 minutes.

The school reference is used to support the outcome of the Entrance Examination and interview.

Candidates are ranked in order of performance in the Entrance Examination and scholarship offers are made based on Entrance Examination rankings.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

St. Mary's College welcomes pupils with special educational needs, providing that the school's Learning Support Department can make reasonable adjustments to support them. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can reasonably accommodate them. However, we advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the Special Needs Coordinator before they sit the entrance exam so that we can make adequate provision. Parents should provide a copy of any Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report to support their request, for example for extra time or other special arrangements.

We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the school.

Scholarships & Awards

Open Academic Scholarships

We offer a number of Open Academic Scholarships based on performance in the College Entrance Examination. These can be worth up to half fees, and will be tenable throughout a pupil's career in the senior school, provided the student's efforts and behaviour remain consistent with the standard expected of scholars. The awards are based on academic merit alone and will be irrespective of income. There is no need to make a separate application: offers will automatically be made to parents whose children come top of the field in the Entrance Examination.

School Assisted Places: Edmund Rice Scholarships

Our school assisted places awarded at 11+ are called Edmund Rice Scholarships, in honour of the founder of our schools. Although they are related to income they are also academic scholarships won on merit. They are open to pupils whose parents' joint income is within the published scales.

As a guide, currently parents whose joint income is less than £21,537 would pay the minimum contribution of £500.00 per annum towards school fees and parents with a joint income of up to £58,900 would contribute something according to their ability to pay. Parents whose joint earnings are in excess of £58,900 would not be considered eligible for means-tested support.

These scholarships will be awarded on academic promise, taking into account examination performance, interview and primary school references. Parents will then be asked to complete a confidential declaration of income and capital on the basis of which the final award will be made. Financial evidence will be required and the parental contribution to fees is assessed annually.

If you are likely to be eligible for one of these awards and wish to be considered, you must complete the preliminary form marked Edmund Rice Scholarships and return it at the same time as the Application Form.

Excellence Awards

The College also wishes to promote other forms of excellence, for example outstanding ability in particular areas, such as Art, Music, and Sport. Parents should indicate this on the application form (an information leaflet is enclosed in the prospectus). It is possible for specific awards to be made in recognition of the child's future contribution to the College in that particular sphere. Assessment will take place at the time of the Entrance Examination. The Award will be subject to student's efforts and behaviour remaining consistent with the standard expected of scholars.

Discretionary Family Awards

We acknowledge that the situation of families trying to make the same provision for a number of children can be a challenging one. We therefore offer Family Awards to parents with multiple children at the College as follows:

- Second child: 10% deducted from fees
- Third child: 20% deducted from fees
- Fourth child: 30% deducted from fees
- Fifth child: 40% deducted from fees

Bursarial Awards

The schools have a limited budget to support parents whose personal circumstances temporarily change unpredictably and dramatically. Any such response would be very flexible and based upon an assessment of the present income and capital position of the family. Any arrangement would be reviewable every term.

Sixth Form Scholarships

Awards are also made for those wishing to enter the Sixth Form. Existing Scholars will usually retain tenure of their previous awards throughout the Sixth Form. New applicants complete an appropriate form and are then assessed in two academic subjects together with a general essay plus a cognitive abilities test. Subsequent interviews then enable candidates to demonstrate a wider grasp of both academic and more general issues together with their motivation for study at Sixth Form and beyond.

Sixth Form Excellence Awards

These are awarded usually for music and sport although occasionally other outstanding contributions beyond the academic curriculum can be taken into account. Candidates are invited to submit evidence of excellence in their nominated field and will also be interviewed subsequently.

Please note that - in line with other independent schools - the maximum fee concession that can be offered on a non means-tested basis is a 50% fee reduction. To ensure that concessions funds are used to support those who need it the most, the combined total value of any Open Academic Scholarships, Excellence Awards and Family Awards will not exceed 50%. The only fee concessions potentially worth in excess of 50% are our School Assisted Places (Edmund Rice Scholarships), which are means-tested academic scholarships.

Complaints

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our admissions process; but copies of the School's complaints procedure can be sent to you on request.