



# DOMINICAN COLLEGE

## ADMISSIONS & PARTICIPATION POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, Galway is an all-girls Catholic voluntary secondary school in the Dominican tradition within the Le Chéile Schools Trust, whose mission and vision are outlined in the Le Chéile Charter. Le Chéile schools strive to be centres of learning and excellence in all aspects of growth, for students, parents, teachers and other staff members. The uniqueness and dignity of each individual are values enshrined in the Dominican philosophy of education. We seek to create an ethos in our school in which truth, justice, compassion and understanding are evident at every level.
- 1.2 The Board of Management of Dominican College is publishing this document as the official Admission & Participation Policy for the school, and the Le Cheile Trust Schools Trust has approved this publication. Copies of this Policy are available at all times at the school and are furnished to each person who applies to be admitted to the school.

### 2. MISSION STATEMENT & ETHOS:

- 2.1 The Mission Statement of Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, is to encourage the development and growth of each individual in the constant search for truth. Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, seeks to educate within a distinct Catholic ethos while respecting the multi-faith dimension of our society. We recognise the unique character of each student and nurture their spiritual, intellectual and physical growth. We are committed to educating students as people of integrity and responsibility, encouraging them to use their gifts to contribute to a more just society. A spirit of co-operation, respect and understanding is encouraged between staff, students, parents and all those associated with our school. We seek to create an inviting place of learning which promotes respect, appreciation and care for each other and for the environment.

### 3. THE SCHOOL

- 3.1 Factual information about the school:  
Name: Dominican College

Address: Taylor's Hill, Galway.  
Telephone No.: (091) 523171  
Fax No.: (091) 526674  
Trustees: Le Chéile Schools Trust  
Principal: Mr. Alan Kinsella

3.2 The school offers:

Junior Certificate Programme  
Leaving Certificate Programme  
Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme  
Transition Year Programme.

3.3 Special Educational Needs students can access resource help by withdrawal or sometimes through team teaching. Students whose first language is not English may be withdrawn at Irish timetabled time for extra help with English language.

3.4 The school is dependent on the Department of Education & Skills for capitation grants and teacher resources and operates within all DES rules and regulations and the relevant law. The school asks for a voluntary annual contribution per family of €250 to supplement the Department capitation. There are also nominal fees for photocopying and the use of a locker.

3.5 The school follows all DES curricular and other programmes pursuant to Sections 9 & 30 of the 1998 Education Act, which may be changed from time to time subject to the directions of the Minister.

3.4 The list of extra-curricular activities includes the following:

Hockey	School Choir	Soccer
Gaelic Football	Basketball	Reading Club
Public Speaking	Debating	Musical

Some of these activities take place at lunchtime, others after school.

The Basketball takes place in P.E. Hall.

Hockey and Soccer training takes place on the astro-turf pitch on the school premises.

Gaelic football training is held in McGrath's field.

3.5 It is the aim of the school to enable students to participate as fully as possible in all school programmes, both curricular and extra-curricular. Procedures are in place to inform the student body of all school activities and opportunities and these aim to facilitate the involvement of students in the operation of the school, having regard to their age and experience. A Student Council is up and running in Dominican College and regular meetings are held, facilitated by a staff member. This gives the student body a voice.

3.6 However, in the case of students with disabilities, their participation in certain school activities may have to be restricted in order to ensure their safety and the safety of

others. The general aim, of course, is to enable all students, including those with disabilities, to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school, consistent with maintaining the safety, health and welfare of all members of the school community.

#### 4. ADMISSIONS

4.1 Dominican College welcomes all eligible students who apply for admission, including those with special educational needs. The school is aware, with regard to admissions, of the principles and requirements of a democratic society and both respects and promotes respect for diversity in society as regards values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life. The Board of Management is aware of its obligations under relevant equality legislation. It is required by law to ensure the efficient use of resources. It is fully aware of its obligations to provide for maximum accessibility of students to the school and acknowledges the right of parents to send their child to the school of their choice. The Board will have regard to all these considerations in managing the admission of students and afterwards in operating the school.

#### 4.2 *Application Procedure:*

In order to apply for enrolment as a 1<sup>st</sup> year student in Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, Galway the application must be made by the parent/guardian by completing the attached application form. Applications from parents/guardians should be signed, dated and returned to the school Principal. In order for the application to be valid it must be received by the School Principal on or before the closing date i.e. **30<sup>th</sup> September** of the year prior to enrolment.

Please note also that secondary school students must have reached the age of 12 years by January 1<sup>st</sup> in the calendar year following the child's entry into 1<sup>st</sup> year (Department of Education & Science Regulations). A full birth certificate will be required.

Dominican College will admit no more than 116 students into 1<sup>st</sup> Year in September 2017.

#### 4.3 *Provision of key information by parents/guardians:*

The application form provides details of all the information which must be completed and submitted to the school. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1988 as amended from time to time, the foregoing information will be held by the school and processed for purposes of considering and processing applications and for administration of school records.

#### 4.4 *Decision Making Process:*

When the application is received it will be considered by the Board of Management and a decision will be made on whether to admit the child to the school. This is in accordance with Section 19 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000. In accordance with

this Act, the Board of Management will make a decision in relation to the application no later than twenty eight (28) days after the closing date of the application. A decision to accept a child for enrolment at the school will be notified to the parents/guardians in writing. The onus is on the parents/guardians to notify the school of any change of address, and contact details.

4.5 Generally speaking, and except in very exceptional circumstances the child will be enrolled in the school when her application has been received and considered by the Board of Management. However, in the event of excess applications being received then the Board of Management will have regard to the following criteria in the order presented in making a decision on enrolment:

- (i) Any relevant requirement of the Department of Education and Science such as class size, staffing provision and any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, such as physical space or the health and welfare of children.
- (ii) Whether the applicant has any siblings attending the school.  
A sibling is defined as a sister of a pupil already enrolled, a step-sister or a child fostered or adopted by the family of the enrolled pupil.
- (iii) Pupils from Feeder School: *Scoil Rois*
- (iv) Close relatives of the Dominican Sisters and of past pupils of Dominican College.
- (v) The religion of the child.
- (vi) First come first served.
- (vii) Lottery.  
This will be presided over by a local Garda Superintendent. Parents of pupils affected will also be invited to attend the process.

Some exceptional admissions will be considered based on special criteria e.g. from applicants recently arrived in Galway.

4.6 In relation to (v) above, please note that the school is a Catholic school and is entitled to give priority to Catholic children in accordance with Section 7 (3) of the Equal Status Act, 2000.

4.7 Incoming students to 1<sup>st</sup> year are required to sit a cognitive ability test which will be used by the school to plan the provision of an appropriate education for each child. This is a condition of admission to the school. The test is used as an indicator of all round ability to direct the school in our mixed ability groupings. Students invited to sit this test already have their place in the school.

4.8 **Enrolment of Students with Special Educational Needs:**

- (i) In relation to applications for the enrolment of a student with Special Educational Needs, the Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available; will request that the student be assessed. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the child concerned relative to the special needs and to profile the support services required.
  
- (ii) On receipt of the report, the Board of Management will assess how the school can meet the needs of the students as specified in the report. Where the Board of Management deems that additional resources are required, it will, after enrolment, request the Department of Education & Skills to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the student outlined in the psychological or medical report. The resources may include access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following:-
  - (i) Visiting teacher service
  - (ii) Resource teacher for Special Needs
  - (iii) Special Needs Assistant
  - (iv) Specialised equipment or furniture
  - (v) Transport service or other.
  
- (iii) The Board of Management or its representatives will meet with the parent/guardian of the child concerned to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. If necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held which may include parents, the Principal, the primary school teacher, learning support teacher, special class teacher, resource teacher or psychologist, as appropriate. It may be necessary for the Board of Management to decide to postpone attendance at the school of a particular student, pending receipt of medical, psychological or assessment reports and/or the provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education & Skills to meet the needs specified in the report.

4.9 **Admission of Students Transferring from Another Post-Primary School:**

When a student who is already enrolled in a second level school makes an application to transfer to Dominican College, the following procedures must be adhered to before a decision is made in respect of the application:

- (i) The parent/guardian of the student (or the student who is over 18 years of age) must submit a completed *Transfer Request Form*.

- (ii) The Principal of the school the student is attending or last attended must return a completed *Student Reference Request Form* to the Principal of Dominican College.
- (iii) Copies of the student's two most recent school reports must be supplied to Dominican College along with the results of state examinations where appropriate.
- (iv) The parent/guardian of the student (or the student who is over 18 years of age) must submit any other relevant information requested by the Principal or the Board. The Board reserves the right to postpone a decision on the enrolment of any applicant pending the furnishing of any additional relevant information required by the Board.
- (v) A full application will only be considered to have been made when the requirements at (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) above have been complied with. Following that, the student and her parent(s)/guardian(s) must attend for interview with the Principal and other relevant personnel at Dominican College.
- (vi) The school will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to Dominican College. Where a student is considered for a place, providing such a place exists, the decision will be taken by the Board of Management, in consultation with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), her former school and, where appropriate, the Education Welfare Officer or other external agencies.
- (vii) Where there is any doubt or question in relation to any of the information provided by Parent(s)/Guardian(s) in support of an enrolment application to this College, the Board of Management reserves the right to use their discretion in relation to that enrolment application.
- (viii) The Board will decide whether or not a transfer:
- is in agreement with the school's Admissions Policy.
  - is feasible in relation to the availability of places in the relevant year group.
  - is feasible in relation to the availability of subjects currently being studied by the student.
  - is feasible in relation to the availability of places in the class groups of the subjects the student wishes to study.
  - is in the best interests of the student.
  - is in the best interests of the other students in the class/year group.
  - is in the best interests of the school.
  - is of educational benefit to the student.
  - should take place immediately or at the beginning of the next academic year.
- (ix) The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse admission if:

- it deems such a move inappropriate according to any of the above criteria outlined in (viii) above.
  - the pupil's records from her previous school/schools are not positive in terms of attendance, application, attitude or behaviour.
  - following an interview with the pupil and her parents a move is deemed inappropriate.
  - the admission of the pupil is in conflict with the characteristic spirit of the school.
  - the student and/or parent/guardian of the student refuse to sign up to abide by the Code of Positive Behaviour.
- (x) In the case of a request being made to enrol a student who has been expelled from another school or is in the process of being expelled, full disclosure will be expected from the parents (or the student who is over 18 years of age). Written permission will be sought from parents and the student to access previous school records and the reasons for the expulsion. The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse admission if the safety of the staff and/or other students are at risk or if the admission of the student might reasonably be expected to negatively impact on student/s currently in the school.
- (xi) If the management of Dominican College is satisfied that the application is bona fide and, mindful of its statutory obligation, is in a position to cater for the educational needs of the applicant while not infringing the rights of the students who are already attending Dominican College, then a conditional place on the school course applied for may be offered to the applicant. Parents/Guardians must confirm acceptance of this place and complete the *School Transfer Registration Form*.
- (xii) The Board of Management delegates to the Principal the responsibility to offer or refuse place offers to students seeking to transfer from other post-primary schools. However, if deemed appropriate by the Principal, she/he may defer a decision on such a request to the Board of Management which will consider it at its next scheduled meeting.
- (xiii) Present students in the school are given priority when applying for places on the Transition Year Programme and in 5<sup>th</sup> Year subjects. When such places have been allocated to existing students following the closing date for such applications, any available places may then be offered to students transferring.
- (xiv) In the event that a student's request to enrol is refused, parents/guardians (or a student who is over 18 years of age) may appeal this decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

## 5. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

5.1 The Code of Behaviour of Dominican College must be read by incoming students and their parents. Parents and students must agree to abide by this Code by signing the necessary form before they start school here. Students of 18 years of age and over will sign the appropriate form as already mentioned.

Failure of parents/guardians to sign the declaration would be valid ground for refusing to admit a child to the school.

### 5.2 *Policy on Suspension and Expulsion:*

- (i) The Board of Management is required by law to maintain reasonable order and safety throughout the school and on all school activities, and this duty is discharged through the school staff, mainly the Principal, Deputy Principal and teachers. Good order is necessary to enable teaching and learning to take place in the school.
- (ii) The maintenance of safety and good order requires the drafting and implementation of a Code of Behaviour where the means by which school staff will deal with behaviour that is unacceptable is set out.
- (iii) The two most serious sanctions available to the school are suspension and expulsion. Expulsion is seen as a last resort, and will normally only be resorted to when all other sanctions have been exhausted. The student and parents/guardians will have been made aware that expulsion is being contemplated by the School Board and will have been invited to make their case on behalf of their child. When an act of gross misconduct occurs, expulsion may be necessary to protect the safety and rights of others in the school without prior recourse to lesser sanctions. The principles of natural justice and fair procedure will continue to apply.
- (iv) Suspension will be availed of either after all of the minor sanctions (Code of Behaviour) have been exhausted, or as a response to a more serious breach of school discipline. In the latter case the suspension may be imposed without prior warning. Suspensions may be from attendance at school and all school activities, or may be more limited in scope and effect. The Principal is empowered to impose a suspension, and is required to inform the Board whenever this is done.
- (v) The Board of Management alone has the power to expel. Procedures for managing suspensions and expulsions, and all details of appeals in these situations, as well as other information on disciplinary matters and a list of school rules are laid out in full in the Code of Behaviour of the school.

**This policy was last reviewed on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management.**