



ADMISSIONS POLICY

SCHOOL PROFILE

St Colman's College Fermoy is a voluntary Catholic Boys Secondary School operating under the Trusteeship of the Diocese of Cloyne. The College accepts admission for boys into 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Transition Year (TY), 5th and 6th year groups on an annual basis.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Admissions policy for St Colman's College is issued by the Board of Management in accordance with its responsibilities as outlined in the Education Act 1998. This policy forms part of a series of policy documents issued by the College to provide guidance to management, staff, parents and pupils of the school. In developing and implementing this policy, the Board of Management recognises the need for parents to make the appropriate choice of second level school for their sons. To this end, this document contains information on the school ethos that guides the daily efforts of the whole school community and finally it outlines the school's enrolment procedures and requirements which provide clarity and planning time for interested parents in their decision making as well as for the necessary preparations to be put in place by school staff.

SCHOOL ETHOS

Patron Saint, St. Colman of Cloyne is the Patron Saint of the College. Born around 530 A.D., we know that his missionary work was principally in East Cork and that he founded a monastery for male religious at Cloyne. The round tower as seen nowadays is built on the site of that monastery. Perhaps you will have noticed the College crest already:- it displays the symbol of the Cross on one side of the round tower and the scholar's quill for writing on the other. Together they remind us of the pursuit of holiness and of the student's call to the learning that are set as a challenge to all who follow Christ. The College motto is "*Dilis do Dhia agus d'Eirinn*".

THE INTENTION OF THE FOUNDING TRUST St. Colman's is a voluntary Catholic all boys' secondary school, nowadays a day school only within the free education scheme and open to all students. It is described as a Diocesan College simply because it was originally built on the instructions of the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Cloyne and other trustees in 1858 to provide a high quality Catholic education for the young men of the diocese. These were the explicit instructions/intentions attached to the founding Deed of Trust. Such

instructions are foundational to what is nowadays called the characteristic spirit or Catholic ethos of the College. Every school in fact throughout the world has an ethos of some kind – there is no such thing as a school free of ethos. While there are many secondary schools in Ireland with a Catholic ethos (under various Trusts such as ERST and CEIST), St. Colman’s belongs to a particular group of forty diocesan schools directly under the trusteeship/patronage of the Irish Bishops concerned. Cloyne has four such diocesan secondary schools within that network. Although it is a Catholic school, St. Colman’s College is equally welcoming to and respectful of students of other faiths and of none, as is clear from its admissions policy. St. Colman’s strives to achieve the highest academic excellence for all and to be open for dialogue with all.

THE COLLEGE’S MISSION STATEMENT The College’s Mission Statement (framed at the front door entrance) is a clear expression of how the management, the staff and the student body seek to fulfil the founding intention of the Trust. Over the past 160 years, people from the many parishes within the diocese of Cloyne and surrounds have appreciated and highly valued the education that they and their families have received in this faith environment. Most notably, one recalls the hundreds of students who went on to be diocesan priests in the diocese of Cloyne and missionary priests in many countries. Likewise, there are past pupils who are laymen of great Christian commitment and distinction working in many careers locally and across the globe. This inherited faith tradition needs to be supported and nourished in new ways and in new generations. The idea of ethos needs to be combined with mission witness. Ethos is not a vague philosophy or attitude to life, but something that is witnessed to in the daily life and commitment of all who share in the educational enterprise – Trustees, Board of Management, Principal, staff, parents and students. Just to declare an ethos (within a picture-frame) at the front door means very little. Ethos will only become a reality when the entire educational community in a school takes responsibility for that ethos, shares it and lives it.

GOSPEL VALUES: LOVE, CARE, RESPECT Catholic schools continue the work of Jesus the teacher. Jesus is called “teacher” on forty-six occasions in the Gospels. It is the title most commonly associated with him in the Gospels. His was a healing ministry, a setting free, an invitation to become Christ-like, a leading out into somewhere new, namely the Kingdom of God where all of one’s talents can be used for personal growth and for the common good. St. Colman’s College is committed to continuing this ministry of Jesus. St. Colman’s, like other Catholic schools, colleges and universities is part of a living tradition. The mystery of Christ from the time of the first Christian gatherings is something that we receive rather than create. It was proclaimed in God’s word and found life in the daily faith and caring response of succeeding generations when for example, parents were inspired to live it and to pass it on. The reality of a faith tradition is the bedrock for Catholic schools. Schools that are embedded in Catholic tradition and seek to live it for our times are a key part of the life of the Church. St. Colman’s students participate in many charitable projects and activities of Christian and Catholic import through the school year. Catholic schools respect both faith and

reason. There is no contradiction between being a fully educated person and a committed Christian. Rather the contrary is true. Both faith and reason working together for the good of civilisation can open doors to a new range of possibilities that are emerging through information technology.

ST. COLMAN'S ENGAGES A PRIEST CHAPLAIN AS A MEMBER OF ITS PASTORAL CARE TEAM
St. Colman's, like other Catholic schools, is called to support Catholic parents who wish to have their teenage children nourished and strengthened in faith, not just in a private way but also so that their faith may be lived and practised in the public arena. Religious education, as with other subjects, is part of the educational class day in St. Colman's. But personal formation in the faith, sometimes called catechesis, or devotional practice, is also an integral part of a full religious education programme. A living partnership between home, school and parish raises the consciousness of all. St. Colman's College has a residential Chaplain, appointed by the Diocese, among its pastoral care and teaching staff. He is Fr. Eamonn Barry, a priest much experienced in youth retreats and Parish Missions. He celebrates special masses on important occasions for class and school groups. He offers spiritual guidance, counselling and prayer opportunities for many. In a faith school, such as St. Colman's, league tables are not everything. Parents and students may, of course, during the school hours visit the College Chapel which was built in 1912 thanks mainly to the generosity of the late Canon Patrick A. Sheehan, past pupil, prolific writer and novelist (Glenanaar, The Graves of Kilmorna etc.).

MISSION STATEMENT

Our aims are:

- To nurture the full academic and personal development of all in the school community.
- To enhance the self-esteem of each person in an environment of mutual respect.
- To attempt, as a Catholic school, to apply the caring values of the Gospel to all aspects of our school life.
- To foster good relationships within the school, with parents and with the local community.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

St. Colman's College Admission Policy reflects the spirit and meaning of the Education Act 1998, The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000. The school accepts applications for enrolment of First Year students on an annual basis. The school may also, within available capacity, accept applications for enrolment for other year groups up to and including repeat Leaving Certificate students. In accepting these applications the school operates in support of the principles of Inclusiveness, Equality of access and participation, Parental choice and Respect for the diversity of societal traditions, beliefs, values and languages.

The school endeavours to ensure that all applicants for enrolment receive a place in the school, structural/regulatory limitations permitting. These limitations may include class size, staff provision, physical accommodation or Health and Safety issues arising from Department of Education and Science regulations and/or School Risk assessments. In the event of the number of applications for First Year places exceeding the capacity of the school to provide a place for all applicants, the school will employ a selection process based on established criteria.

Late applications will be placed on a waiting list bearing in mind the selection criteria.

The specific criteria applicable to the First Year intake as well as other year groups are outlined below:

Places available;

The Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of students to be enrolled in line with the selection criteria.

Given the high demand for places in the recent years, we may not be in a position to offer places to all applicants.

Enrolment is open to boys only.

First Year Intake. The admissions process for the First Year group commences each October. All Primary Schools in the catchment area are notified that enrolment has commenced. With the permission of Primary School Principals, teachers from St. Colman's make an onsite presentation to the 5th and 6th class pupils outlining the curriculum content, facilities and activities available within the College. Prospectus and official application forms are provided to the schools. All interested parents and prospective pupils are invited to attend an Information Evening held in the College during the first term where further information is made available and any queries answered.

- a. Following receipt of applications, the College hosts an Enrolment Assessment (exam format) for all prospective pupils in the College Assembly Hall on the first Saturday of February. The Assessment currently consists of tests in Irish, English and Mathematics. The purpose of this assessment is to facilitate the organising of mixed ability classes in First Year and to facilitate the provision of learning supports where specific needs are identified.
- b. **Selection Criteria.** In the event that the number of First Year applicants exceed the number of available places, the following Selection Criteria, in order of listed preference, will be used to determine student selection:
 - i. Applicants with brothers attending the school for the upcoming academic year.
 - ii. A son of a member of the teaching staff (with a permanent/CID contract on closing date of admission) or a member of the ancillary staff.

- iii. Applicants whose brother(s) attended the school in the past.
- iv. Applicants whose father /Grandfather was a past-student.
- v. Applicants from Primary schools within the catchment area.
- vi. Applicants from schools outside the traditional catchment area who have sent students to St Colmans.
- vii. Students from other schools.

NOTE:

In the event that there are insufficient places for the number of applicants after applying categories i-vii, a lottery will apply in allotting places for those who have been unsuccessful in obtaining a place.

Late applications will be placed on a waiting list bearing in mind the above criteria.

In circumstances where, it has been impossible to apply all the categories due to excess of applicants over the number of available places then a lottery will apply in allotting places for those who have been unsuccessful in obtaining a place.

The lottery will be supervised by;

Two member of the BOM

A solicitor

How the lottery will be conducted:

All applicants within the category will have their names drawn until all places are filled.

When the places are filled names of the applicants in this category will continue to be drawn to establish the order of applicants on the waiting list.

Parents/Guardians will be offered a place and asked to return confirmation/refusal by registered post or by hand within 5 working days.

Twins/Triplets or siblings:

If one Twin/Triplet/sibling is offered a place places will be offered to their Twin/Triplet/sibling provided the schools Health and Safety considerations are met. However the number of places allocated by the BOM will not be exceeded.

Enrolment Procedure;

-Application forms for enrolment are available from the school or on the school website

-The closing date is specified on the form

- It is the parents/guardians responsibility to ensure that application forms are accurate
- all forms will be stamped to indicate date and time of receipt
- All Late applications will be placed on a waiting list

- c. **Special Educational Needs.** In keeping with the College Ethos and its Mission Statement, applicants with identified special need requirements or specific needs related to a disability have and will continue to be welcomed into the school community. Accordingly, the Board of Management strives to identify, plan for and provide the necessary structural and educational supports required by applicants with special educational needs.

The College staff will conduct an individual assessment of each applicants needs based on a review of his primary school records in order to assist in establishing what additional resources may be required to support any given student. The applicants' parents are invited to discuss their son's specific needs with a view to seeking additional supports from the Department of Education and Science where necessary. It should be understood that acceptance for enrolment is contingent on the school having the appropriate supports and resources in place to meet each student's specific needs.

- d. **Leaving Certificate Repeat Intake.** Within the constraints already outlined, the school may accept students seeking to repeat the Leaving Certificate Examination. Applicants will be assessed on a case by case basis and acceptance is conditional on a student's commitment to full-time attendance and his acceptance of the school's Code of Behaviour.
- e. **Transfer Students from Other Schools.** Applicants seeking to transfer from other schools may be accepted on the basis of the previously stated provisions of this Admissions Policy. Additionally:
- i. The applicant must satisfy School Management as to the reason for transfer. The school will request information from the applicant's previous/present school concerning attendance, educational progress, disabilities and/or special educational needs. (Section 20 Education Welfare Act 2000).
 - ii. School Management must satisfy itself that the transfer is in the best interests of the applicant.
 - iii. The School Management may consult the Education Welfare Officer if appropriate.
- f. **Exceptions.** The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application for admission in exceptional circumstances as provided for under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. These may include applicants for transfer from other schools where actions of gross misconduct by the applicant are established.
- g. **Appeals.** Under Section 28 of the Education Act 1998, parents have a right of appeal where their son has been refused enrolment into the school. Where an applicant has been refused admission, the Board of Management must inform the parents/guardians of this decision in writing and must specify, again in

writing, the reasons for the refusal. Appeals should be submitted to the Secretary General, Department of Education and Sciences, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Application for admission to St. Colman's College can only be accepted on the official application form.

Queries in relation to the College's Admission Policy may be addressed to the Principal of the school or the Chairperson of the Board of Management.