

Sacred Heart School Drogheda



ADMISSIONS POLICY

Phone: 041-9837812

Fax: 041-9835146

Email: office@sacredheart.ie

mhoey@sacredheart.ie

Website: www.sacredheart.ie

Section A: School Profile

The Sacred Heart School is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for girls, operating under the Trusteeship of CEIST. As such it supports the Religious and Educational Philosophy of its Founder “Sr. Catherine McAuley as set out in the CEIST Charter.

The school is managed by a Board of Management, is funded by the Department of Education and Science and operates within the regulations and guidelines set down from time to time by that Department. The school has a very active Parents’ Council and Students’ Council.

The Sacred Heart School aims, with the resources available, to provide the best possible environment in order to cater for the cultural, educational, moral, physical, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions of all students. We show special concern for the disadvantaged and we make every effort to ensure that the uniqueness and dignity of each person is respected, we must cater for the changing needs of to-day’s world and towards that end, and we frequently review our various programmes. Being keenly aware of the ever-increasing effect of outside influences on the lives of our students, we are even more concerned to maintain Catholic values and practices.

Working together as a school community, the Board of Management, parents, staff and students aim to provide an environment which will allow each students to develop intellectually, physically, morally, socially and spiritually so as they will be able to grow to fulfil their role in society and reach their potential.

Section B. Operating Context

Within the context and parameters of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes, the rights of the Trustees/Board of Management as set out in the Education Act 1998 (Section 15 (1), (2)), and the funding and resources available, the school supports the key principles outlined in the Education Act, which underpin our Admissions Policy. These are:

1. Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of students with a disability or other special educational needs.
2. Equality with respect to maximum access and participation in the school
3. Parental choice in relation to choice of school, having regard for the characteristic spirit of the school. (Section 15 (2)(b) of the Education Act 1998, requires the Board of Management to “uphold 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
4. Respect of the diversity of values, beliefs, languages, traditions and ways of life in society.

The school reserves the right to promote the characteristic spirit of the school. With the agreement of the school's trustees 'CEIST', this policy was ratified by the school's Board of Management in September 2016 and replaces all earlier admission policies. It is to be clearly understood that offers of places in the school are made in strict accordance with the most recently ratified Admissions Policy and are not under the terms of any earlier Admissions Policy.

Any queries arising from the Admissions Policy may be addressed to the Principal of the School (Ms Leoni Carroll, Sacred Heart Secondary School, Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth), or to Mr. Vincent Donovan, Chairperson of the Board of Management, Sacred Heart School, Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth.) or contact the School Office on: 041 9837812

MISSION STATEMENT

Sacred Heart School is committed to excellence

We see the primary role of our school as providing an experience of living in a Christian community, which has, as its ideal the community of the gospel... one of love, care and trust.

Section C: School Details

School Name:	Sacred Heart School
Address:	Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth.
Contact details:	Telephone: 041-9837812 Fax: 041-9835146 E-mail: mhoey@sacredheart.ie Website: www.sacredheart.ie
Principal:	Ms. Leoni Carroll
Deputy Principal:	Ms. Deirdre Lynch
Chairperson Board of Management:	Mr. Vincent Donovan
Chairperson Parents' Council:	Ms. Anne Marie Coutinho
Chaplain:	Fr. Philip Gaffney
Guidance Counsellor:	Ms. Emma Haran
Resource Teachers:	Ms. Kathleen Sweeney, Ms. Laura Shanahan
Number of Teachers:	38 Full time teachers
School Secretaries:	Amanda Hoey (School Secretary) Jane Casey (Accounts Secretary)
Number of Ancillary Staff:	4
School Day:	Assembly 8.50am – 9am 1 st Class 9:00, Break 10: 50-11:05, Lunch: 12:50-1.30 School finished: 3.30pm

The building is open to students from 8.15am and will remain open for ten minutes after official closing time, except in the case of those students taking part in extracurricular activities or evening study. Supervision is provided between these times only. The school authorities will make all reasonable efforts to inform parents/guardians of any minor adjustments in the opening/closing times which may occur.

Section D: Programmes & Subjects offered

The Sacred Heart School follows the Curricular programmes set down by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time in accordance with the Education Act 1998 (Sections 9 and 30).

The following programmes are offered at the Sacred Heart School:

- Junior Certificate Programme: (3 Yrs.) curriculum outlined below
- Leaving Certificate Applied: (2 Yrs.): Students study a variety of subjects in three distinct areas: Vocational Preparation, Vocational Education, and General Education. The LCA programme is only offered when there is a demand and school has the required resources available to run the programme.
- Established Leaving Certificate Programme (2 Years) Curriculum outlined below. Possible option to include the LCVP Programme. Further details available from the school.

<u>Junior Cycle: (3 years)</u>	<u>Senior Cycle: - (2 years)</u>
Religious Education	Religious Education
Irish	Irish
English	English
Maths	Maths
History	History
Geography	Geography
Science	Physics
Business Studies	Chemistry
French	Biology
Spanish	Business
Home Economics	Accounting
Art	French
Music	Spanish
S.P.H.E.	PE
C.S.P.E.	Home Economics
P.E.	Art
	Music
	SPHE
	Guidance
	Information Technology

The Principal allocates students to classes. Subject to sufficient demand and resources, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine on an annual basis the range and level of subjects, including the minimum number of students to justify the offering of a particular subject class.

Following Junior Certificate, students may opt to proceed to Transition Year, to Leaving Certificate Applied Programme or to the Established Leaving Certificate Programme.

Transition Year

The Transition Year is an optional one-year programme, which comes immediately after completion of the Junior Certificate. There are presently three groups of Transition year however the numbers allocated to the programme are based on the demand and resources available to the school. There is a maximum of 24 students in each class. The places are allocated on the basis of a completed Application Form, an interview, behaviour and participation records. The current Transition Year Co-ordinator, a previous Transition Year Co-ordinator and Deputy Principal/Principal usually conduct the interviews. The following criteria will apply in selecting students for the Transition Year:

- Completion of Application Form and interview.
- The professional view of the school is that the student would benefit from the Transition Year experience and enhance the programme for others.
- A good participation, behavioural and attendance records in Junior Cycle

The aim of the programme is: -

- To provide a good academic basis for beginning the Senior Cycle Course.
- To develop aspects of the curriculum which tend not to be catered for elsewhere in the school curriculum
- To develop teamwork through task oriented projects.
- To develop links between school and the wider community.
- To encourage students to become self-motivated learners.
- To provide an opportunity for students to develop an understanding of how learning occurs generally and with particular reference to their own learning styles.
- To introduce students to a wide range of cultural activities and sporting activities
- To prepare students to become responsible members of society.

A fee (this fee is reviewed annually) is requested to facilitate the wide range of activities in which students are involved during this year.

Provision of subjects and activities is subject to resources and annual review

Note: The Board reserves the right in relation to the above programmes to decide on the numbers entering each programme on an annual basis.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The Sacred Heart School provides for a wide range of artistic, cultural, social and sporting activities to develop the talents of all students and to provide them with the confidence to be involved in various activities in later life. Examples of these activities are to be found in our prospectus, website, Facebook page and school app.

Note: Provision of these activities is subject to resources including an annual review.

Homework and Study

The school provides for 80 students (maximum) to avail of an Evening Study facility Monday to Thursday between 3.45pm and 5.45pm. Teachers supervise these periods and there is a fee bi-annually. Places are allocated in the following order Sixth Year, Third Year, Fifth Year and remainder of the school. A written application form must be completed by Parents/Guardians. Forms are available in the school office in September and January.

The school believes that study is an exercise in self-discipline, which must be developed. It involves both written and oral work. It is essential that the students develop effective study skills, which is supported by the Guidance Department. The actual time to be spent on homework and study should be about two to two and a half hours for first year and increasing for each year up to three and a half to four hours for senior students.

Students' Council

The Student Council consists of representatives from each class group. The Co-ordinator of the Student Council is a member of the staff. The Students' Council provides a forum through which the students of the school can play a full part in the development of a partnership approach to school life and issues.

Student Leadership Council

The Student Leadership Council is made up of Senior Prefects who represent each class group, four House Captains, Extra Curricular Activities Prefects and the Head Girl. Their role is to develop a House spirit, foster community, support the student body and develop leadership skills.

Parents' Council

The school has an active and vibrant Parents' Council. The Parents' Council aims to promote the educational development of our students and to assist with the various school activities.

The Council meet regularly during the academic year. All parents whose children attend the school are eligible to become members of the Parents' Council. The Annual General Meeting is held each year in September, membership of the Council is voluntary.

Communications:

Parent/Teacher meetings are held once a year for each year group. Dates and times of these meetings are reviewed annually. These meetings are brought to the attention of the parents/guardians by letter and text message. Parents/guardians are strongly urged to attend.

There are various functions and meetings during the year and parents/guardians will be notified well in advance of such meetings. These meetings are usually held in the evening. The following is a sample of what can take place during the year:

- Graduation Night (6th years)
- Information Night on College application (6th Years)
- Subject choices for third & Transition year students
- Meeting for parents of incoming first years.
- Various talks on Health related issues.

Section E: Admissions Procedures

The Sacred Heart School Admissions Policy welcomes all students including students with special educational needs for whom the school can provide an appropriate education. The school aims to provide an integrated and an inclusive education.

On admission, the parents/guardians will be informed on the number of classes/students the school proposes to enrol.

Each year the Board of Management decide in advance the number of First Year students for whom the school can provide an appropriate education, having due regard for the relevant Department of Education & Science provisions re: class size, staff provision and/or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, such as physical space or the health and welfare of children.

Students who are eligible for Admission

- Have applied to the school and completed and submitted an Enrolment form.
- Having reached the required age 12 on the 1st January in the calendar year following the child's entry into First Year.
- Having normally completed Sixth class in Primary School.
- Be willing in conjunction with their parents to accept the Catholic school ethos.
- Be willing, with parents/guardians to accept the school Code of Behaviour. Confirmation in writing, is required, that parents/guardians and students accept the Code of Behaviour.
- Be willing to sit an Entrance Assessment.

- **NB:** Only students who are offered a place in the school take the Assessment Test. The purpose of this is to ensure that classes are of mixed ability and to decide what additional resources are required, if any.

Selection Criteria

In the event of school having more applications than places available, the following criteria will apply in the following order:

1. Siblings (sisters of students of the Sacred Heart School).
2. Students whose parents were past pupils. A past pupil is defined as any girl who graduated from 6th year in the Sacred Heart School
3. A student whose father or mother is a member of the staff of the school for a least one year.
4. Students of the religious faith, which is promoted in the founding intention of the school (i.e. Catholic Students), selected on a “first come, first served” basis, according to the date of application to the school (application is open from birth).
5. Other students on a “first come, first served” basis according to the date of application to the school (application is open from birth).

Parents are welcome to apply to the school at any time from the date of the girl’s birth onwards. Any such application must be in writing on the enrolment form available by calling to or telephoning the school office or downloading it from the school website. Once the enrolment form is received by the school it will be date stamped and acknowledged by the school in writing. A copy will be sent to the parent/guardian as proof of receipt of the application. Please note that if no written acknowledgment is received by the parent(s) it is an indication that the school has not received the written application. Parents should note that such a written application/acknowledgement is not an offer/guarantee of an offer of a place for their daughter, as offers of places are only sent out in October/November of the year of entry (see admissions procedure). The only relevance of such a written application and acknowledgement is that the date of such application will give a priority, see selection criteria and criteria 4 and 5 in particular.

Enrolment process for 1st year commences after the open evening. Students are offered a place in 1st year in October/November of the year preceding the year of entry, the number of which will have been decided by the Board of Management. First round of offers will be posted to parents/guardians, Parents/guardians must return the completed Application form to the school within the specified date and time limit which is set out in the letter of offer. Failure to do so will be taken as a refusal to accept the offer of a place. This process will continue until all available places are offered and accepted.

Once all places have been filled, the remaining applicants will be informed by letter and requested to complete a form to express their interest in being placed on a waiting list. Late applications will only be considered after all applications received on time have been processed.

In the case of students with special educational needs, the Board, having received the relevant information, will make a decision and inform the parents in writing of this decision as per the terms outlined below.

There will be an Assessment Test, which all incoming First Year Students must sit. Failure to sit for this test will result in the forfeiture of the place in the school unless a reasonable, documented excuse is submitted. The test is used to assess attainment levels in order to best cater for students according to their needs and to allocate students to structured mixed ability classes. It takes place after the admission process has been completed and consequently has no bearing on a decision to admit a student.

Parents/Guardians of incoming 1st year students will be invited to attend an Information Evening. This is a vital part of our admission process. Parents/guardians and their daughters are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting.

On completion of the admission process a request will be made for all relevant information to be made available from the student's previous school, including such matters as attendance record, behaviour issues, special education needs etc. This will assist the school in making appropriate education provision for each student.

Parents will be presented with the following with their Application Form: -

- Form for non-refundable Deposit
- Resource Questionnaire.

Special Educational Needs

In welcoming applications from students with special educational needs, the school will use the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Skills, to make reasonable provision and accommodation for all such students and will ensure that these students may participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonably practicable. While recognising and fully supporting parents' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply of resources suitable to the needs of the individual student, being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills.

School management and parents must cooperate, from the earliest possible time, to establish the special educational needs of the student, the resources required to meet those needs and the submission of a well-researched request to the Department of Education and Skills/Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) seeking the

allocation of appropriate resources. Parents are encouraged to contact the school well in advance of the admissions process should they feel that their daughter has special educational needs as considerable delays have been experienced by schools in receiving a response from the Department of Education and Skills to a request for special resources.

In making provision for special educational needs students, the following information is required:

Has the student had access to any of the following:

1. Special needs assistant or classroom assistant.
2. Special class.
3. Help, for specific needs, from any resource teacher
4. Assistance with behavioural modifications
5. Psychological assessment. Report to be provided.
6. Any additional resources to help with their special/specific needs.
7. Help in areas including visual impairment, hearing impairment, general learning disability or emotional disturbance.
8. Any resource in relation to travel or mobility etc.

Medical:

If a student has a medical condition requiring medication during the school day or possible medical intervention, parents are required to make this known in advance when applying to the school. Any additional information required by the school will then be sought and the conditions of entry clearly agreed between the parents and the school.

Exceptionally Able

The Report of the Special Review Committee (SERC) (1993, P.160) defines students who are exceptionally gifted or talented as those who have demonstrated their capacity to achieve high performance in one or more of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership ability
- Visual and performing arts
- Mechanical aptitude
- Psychomotor ability (e.g. athletics, gymnastics)

A working definition of 'gifted' that is accepted worldwide in educational and psychological circles is that a 'gifted' student shows exceptional ability in one area or more (e.g. mathematical, verbal, spatial, musical, artistic, etc.). The term 'gifted' tends to be reserved for those with an IQ (Intelligence Quotient) greater than 130 on standardised IQ tests, i.e. the top 2% of the population.

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Please notify the school if your child has been assessed as being exceptionally gifted or talented.

If an expert report is provided, it should include a workable strategy for addressing the needs, allowing for the resources available.

The Board of Management, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of the special needs student can be met. Final confirmation of a place may, in exceptional cases, have to be withheld until the Department of Education and Skills confirms that the necessary resources are to be allocated.

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student where either:

- A. The student has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.

Or

- B. In the opinion of the Board of Management, the student poses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

Students Transferring to the School:

The school is obliged to offer the maximum number of places when enrolling first years at the beginning of the academic year. The school is not obliged to keep each year at a fixed number.

The Board of Management will decide on applications for admission to any year other than First Year by applying the following criteria:

All relevant information having been made available from the applicant's previous school and following an interview with the student in the company of her parents/guardians, the Board will decide whether or not a transfer: -

- Is in agreement with the school's Admissions Policy
- Is in the best interest of the student.
- Is in the best interest of the school
- Is of educational benefit to the student.

It may be necessary for consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer to take place.

Where a student is considered for a place, the decision will be taken by the Board of Management, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians, her former school, the educational welfare officer, whether such a place may be offered immediately or whether it would be better to wait until the beginning of the next academic year (See Transfer Policy for further information)

Students applying for readmission to the school:

If a parent/guardian removes a student from Sacred Heart School for any reason, the student's place is forfeited and the school is not obliged to reinstate the student. Former students may however apply for readmission, subject to the school Admissions Policy, available space and suitability. Management will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student and interview the student prior to making a decision regarding the offer of a place. Where it is established that a student's behaviour was unacceptable during her previous time in the school the principal may decide not to accept such a student in the interest of the general school community.

Leaving Certificate Repeat Students

Only students who sat the Leaving Certificate in the Sacred Heart School will be considered for a place as a repeat Leaving Certificate student. The student must apply in writing to the school stating the reason why they wish to repeat and nominating the subjects and subject levels. Places will be offered based on the following criteria:

- The availability of places in the class/year group
- Availability of places in requested subjects
- A record of good behaviour and attendance.

Right of parents to Appeal

The Board of Management of a recognised school shall not refuse to admit as a student in such school a child, in respect of whom an application to be so admitted has been made, except where such refusal is in accordance with the policy.

Should a student's application for admission to the school be refused the parents/guardians have the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, (Education Act 1998, Section 29 (d).) The parents/guardians must be informed in writing of the Board's decision and the reasons why the student was not accepted should be clearly stated. The parents'/guardians' right to appeal should be restated and the application form provided. (Circular M48/01). The appeal must be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the Board of Management was notified to the parents/guardians concerned. (Circular, M48/01).

An appeal may be made to: The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, The Appeals Administration Unit, Department of Education and Skills, Friars Mill Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Note: Parents/guardians should be informed that an appeal should be made in writing on the Application Form supplied. Parents/guardians must inform the school in writing of the decision to appeal.

Student Enrolment Form

It is essential that all the information requested on this form be supplied, otherwise the enrolment will not be processed.

Year of Entry to Sacred Heart School:

Student's Surname:

Student's First Name:

Student's P.P.S. Number: **Date of Birth:**.....

Home Address:
.....

Contact Phone No (Business Hours)..... **Email Address:**.....

Home Phone No: **Nationality:**

Religion:

Mother's Name: **Occupation:**

Past Pupil Year: **Member of Staff?**
(Yes or No)

Father's Name: **Occupation:**.....

No. of children in family: **Student's place in family:**

Number of Sisters: **Number of brothers:**

Name and year of siblings past/present of this school:
.....
.....
.....

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardians :
.....

The Board wishes to advise parents/guardians that, in the event of a student being refused entry to Sacred Heart School, an appeal may be made under Section 29 (d) of the Education Act 1998.

On appeal, parents/guardians are informed in writing of the Board's decision and the reasons why the student was not accepted. The right to appeal will be restated.

Any appeal must be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the Board of Management was notified to the parents/guardians and on the Appeals application form available in the school office or downloaded from www.education.ie

Appeals forms can be submitted to The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. *The Appeals Administration Unit, Department of Education and Skills*, Friars Mill Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Parents/guardians are asked to inform the school in writing of the decision to appeal.