**Admission Policy of Mother of Divine Grace School**

**Ferndale Avenue,**

**Ballygall, Dublin 11**

**Catholic ( Dublin Diocese)**

**Roll Number 20059V**

## **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 Archbishop Dermot Farrell on 18/1/2023 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 Mother Of Divine Grace School 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 application form for admission is published on the school’s website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

## **Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

Mother of Divine Grace School ( MDG School) is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a catholic ethos under the patronage of the 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:

1. the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
2. a living relationship with God and with other people and
3. a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
4. 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(BOM) of MDG School 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.

Mother of Divine Grace School is under the trusteeship of the Holy Faith Sisters, Glasnevin.

Mother of Divine Grace School is linked to the Catholic Parish Church of Our Mother of Divine Grace, Ballygall.

Mother of Divine Grace School is a co-educational vertical school.

The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are inspired by the values of the Christian Gospel.

These values promote the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each pupil as a human person. These values inform the school’s admission policy and include the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and respect for diversity.

Prayer is a regular feature of the school day. Such prayer uses the resources provided by Catholic tradition and practice while seeking to be inclusive in its expression. The school teaches the Grow in Love Programme.

The celebration of the Christian Liturgical Seasons is a part of the rhythm of the school year. Children are offered the opportunity to participate in these celebrations which are celebrated at Assembly on Friday mornings.

Catholic pupils are prepared for the reception of the sacrament of First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation, in accordance with arrangements in the diocese. This occurs in partnership with the family and the parish. The First Communion class takes part in the “Do this in Memory” Programme.

The school identifies itself with the Parish and Diocesan Communities leading to a sense of the Universal Church whose concern extends to all peoples.

The school is engaged in a range of programmes which aim at providing excellence in teaching and learning. These programmes are supported by DEIS *(Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)*. Professional standards are maintained and pupils learn in a safe and happy environment.

The school provides a broad range of in-school and after-school activities aimed at promoting the development and well -being of pupils. These activities include music, dance, choir, drama therapy, basketball, book club, games club, cookery, football, camogie, table tennis and swimming.

The school collaborates with the home through induction and class meetings, individual Parent/Teacher meetings and a variety of activities organised by the Home/School/Community Co-ordinator. The school has an active Parents Association.

The school welcomes all newcomers to the school community provided they respect its values and ethos and support its policy.

## **Admission Statement**

Mother of Divine Grace school is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. Mother of Divine Grace school will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

1. the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
2. the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
3. the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
4. the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
5. the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
6. the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
7. the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
8. the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
9. 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.

* Mother of Divine Grace N.S. will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating 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.
* Mother of Divine Grace N.S. will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

## **Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

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| **School is inclusive and educates pupils with Special needs in the mainstream setting. Parents are asked to furnish the school with all relevant files, reports and documentation.**   1. **In the case of a mainstream school with a SEN class attached**   **Mother of Divine Grace School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, is in the process of establishing a class to provide an education exclusively for students with AutismSpectrum Disorder.** |

## **Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

1. the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#_heading=h.30j0zll) below for further details)
2. 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
3. Mother of Divine Grace school is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student, a person who is not of catholic religion where it is proved that the refusal is

essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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| **School with special education class**  **The special class to be attached to Mother of Divine Grace School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism 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. Please see Appendix 1 which outlines specific criteria for admissions to our ASD Class.** |

## **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:

**Application Procedure**

Application forms are available in the school office or on the website. The school will commence applications on Oct 1st of the year preceding the school year concerned . ( the school cannot accept applications before October 1st) These must be completed and returned to the office within 21 days in the year preceding enrolment. The parents/ guardians will receive written notification of the decision or otherwise within 21 working days of the closing date, or for late applications on receipt of the fully complete application.

* Children will be enrolled on application provided that there is space available.
* **Junior Infants are enrolled in September. As a prerequisite for enrolment, only children who have reached the age of four years on or before 1st September prior to the September. (\*see additional note at the end of criteria for admission).**
* Decisions in relation to application for enrolment are made by the Board of Management.

Children enrolled in MDG Primary School, are required to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies. Parents / Guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) co-operate with these policies in an age-appropriate way. A copy of the Code of Behaviour and will be issued to all parents and each parent will be requested to sign an undertaking to uphold the school Code of Behaviour.

**Selection Criteria:**

**In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment exceeding the number of places available the following criteria will be used to prioritise children for enrolme**nt:

1. Children from the Early Start Preschool and Siblings and step siblings of children already enrolled in the school and children resident in the parish (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking) (Foster children will be regarded as siblings).
2. Children of staff and the eldest child will have priority in this ranking.
3. Children residing outside the Mother of Divine Grace Parish (the eldest child will have priority in this ranking)
4. Where applications or expressions of interest were received by MDG school before 1 February 2020 and if we confirmed in writing that the applicant had been placed on a list for the purposes of allocating school places in the year concerned, places on such a waiting list remain valid. However, these waiting lists will cease to exist from 31 January 2025.
5. 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: the oldest student will be given priority. If two applicants have the same date of birth, then a lottery will apply with an independent party present.

\* In the event that, following the implementation of all the above criteria the school still has vacancies, the Board will allocate places for enrolment in Junior Infants beginning with those who have reached the age of 4 years on the 2nd of May prior to the September on which they are starting Primary school for the first time and will continue to allocate available places in accordance with the respective ages on 3rd, 4th, 5th May etc.

## **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:

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| 1. a student’s prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí, except the **MDG Early Start program** 2. the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school; 3. a student’s academic ability, skills or aptitude; 4. the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student’s parents; 5. a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission; 6. a student’s connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school, except siblings as outlined above. 7. 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). |

## **Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to MDG School will be based on the following:

* Our school’s admission policy
* The school’s annual admission notice.
* 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 15](#_heading=h.3znysh7) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 16](#_heading=h.2et92p0)  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.

## **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](#_heading=h.tyjcwt) below for further details).

## **Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from Mother of Divine Grace School, 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.

## **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 MDG School where—

1. it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
2. 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.
3. 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
4. an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in [section 10](#_heading=h.1fob9te) above.

## **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 listof the students in relation to whom

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1. an application for admission to the school has been received,
2. (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
3. (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 SocialWelfare Consolidation Act 2005).

## **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 MDG School 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 MDG School 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.

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.

## **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.

## **Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

If there is a place in the specific class then a pupil seeking admission will be granted a place. This will also apply after the commencement of the school year.

## **Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees**

The board of MDG School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

1. an application for admission of a student to the school, or
2. the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

## **Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

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

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| If a parent requests that their child attend Mother of Divine Grace school without attending religious instruction in the school, the class teacher will provide some alternative work for the pupil. 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. |

## **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.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year.

Date: 03.10.2023( ratified by BOM meeting on this date)

Signed:

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Catherine Coveney, Chairperson Eoin Dolan. Principal

Date: 03.10.2023

*APPENDIX 1 Enrolment of Pupils to the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) class*

Children may gain admission to an ASD class following submission to the Board of Management of appropriate documentation from approved services e.g. HSE Disability Services. Applications must be made in writing and must include a recent (no more than 2years old) psychological assessment report. Applications should be sent to the school by March 1st of the preceding school year and must also include birth certificate and 2 proof of address documents - one to be a utility bill. The school must receive this documentation with the enrolment form for the application to proceed. Once received, the pupil is placed on a waiting list.

*Enrolment criteria for the ASD class*

* + - 1. The child must have a primary diagnosis of Autism/autism Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-V or ICD10 by the psychologist or member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team. The classes are for all pupils who meet this criteria irrespective of cognitive ability.
      2. The report must contain a recommendation by a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.
      3. The child must be 4 by 1st of September of the year of commencement in ASD class.
      4. The parents of the child must accept and agree to the school's code of behaviour and the terms of this policy.

The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for the ASD Class:

1. Pupils from Mother of Divine Grace’s mainstream classes for whom the ASD class is

considered a more suitable setting

(ii) Children transferring from Mother of Divine Grace’s Early Start Unit

(iii) Siblings (including step-siblings, resident at same address) of children already attending the school----priority to oldest.

(iv) Children of current staff members

1. Children of Ballygall parish ---priority to oldest.

(vi) All children who apply to the school and are not residents within the parish boundaries are entitled to a place in the school if there are vacancies in the school after the groups from (i) to (v) have been allocated places----priority to oldest.

*Decisions on Enrolment*

Each application will be considered by an admissions team comprised of the Principal ,Deputy Principal and a member of the SEN team. A recommendation will be made to the Board of Management. The factors taken into consideration include

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 the availability of the necessary resources pertaining to the enrolment

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 sufficient classroom space

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Taking all the above into account the Board of Management reserves the right of admission and is the final arbiter of enrolment based on the needs of the applicant. Letters of acceptance will be sent to parents by the 8th of April of the preceding school year. At that point a transition plan will be put in place to facilitate a smooth transition. This may involve liaison with other schools and agencies.

*Monitoring and review*

The pupil's enrolment in a special class will be under continual review. An annual review will take place involving all pupils attending the special classes and whether it is deemed the appropriate placement. The school promotes optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream activities when deemed appropriate and suitable by staff.

*Behaviour*

It is acknowledged that pupils with special educational needs may display challenging behaviour at times. All efforts will be made to manage such behaviour through the implementation of the pupil's IEP and support plan. All pupils are subject to the School Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety Statement. Where a child’s behaviour impacts in a negative way on other pupils to the extent that their constitutional right to an education I sbeing affected, as judged by the Board of Management, the school reserves the right to advise parents that a more suitable setting should be found for their child.

*Discharge Policy*

Our discharge policy for the ASD classes is in line with that of the whole school. It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the classroom once they have reached the age of thirteen. It will be deemed compulsory that the year that the student turns 13 will be their last year. Pupils who reach the age of thirteen after September 30th in any year will be permitted to complete that academic year. This means a June discharge in the following year. The onus will be on the parents to negotiate the placement with a suitable secondary school. Discharge may also be recommended after the first and/or any subsequent year if following psychological assessments and consultation with the parents/guardians, it is felt that the placement is no longer appropriate and serves the best interest of the child. The Board of Management has the right to overrule any decision made in this regard. This Policy was ratified and signed on behalf of the Board of Management below:

Date: 04.10.2023

Signed:

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Catherine Coveney (Chairperson) Eoin Dolan (Principal)

Date: