

# Holy Family Secondary School

Newbridge, Co. Kildare

School Roll Number: 61682A



## Admissions Policy April 2024

School Patron:

The Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin



## **HFSS Admissions Policy: Holy Family Secondary School Mission Statement**

Holy Family Secondary School is a Roman Catholic, girls-only, all-ability, diocesan day school, under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Our school provides an education based on the vision of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, founder of the Holy Family Order. In accordance with this vision, we promote the Christian virtues of faith, hope, love, gentleness, respect and tolerance, and we emphasise togetherness and family.

Guided by these Christian virtues, and dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, it is our mission to provide a safe, caring, inclusive learning environment in which to foster the spiritual, intellectual, academic, aesthetic, physical, emotional and social development of each student so that she may fulfil her own unique potential and may leave our school with the capacity and the willingness to contribute to the building of a society characterised by these Christian virtues.

It is also our mission to foster a strong, positive partnership with our parents, parish, past-students, and the wider community.

*‘L’esprit de famille se résume tout entier dans ce mot: charité.’ (P.B. Noailles)  
(The Holy Family spirit may be summarised in one word: love.)*

### **1. 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 the school’s patron, the Bishop of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022. It is published on the school’s website [www.holyfamily.ie](http://www.holyfamily.ie) and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

In this policy ‘parent’ will be taken to mean ‘parent or guardian’.

**The relevant dates and timelines for Holy Family Secondary 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 [www.holyfamily.ie](http://www.holyfamily.ie) and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it during the application timeframe.**

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

Holy Family Secondary School is a Catholic all girls’ voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of The Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.

“Catholic Ethos” in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which seeks to promote:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects;
- (b) a loving relationship with God and with other people;
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus;
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith.

The ethos places an onus on our school to provide religious education in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, which 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 of Holy Family Secondary 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.

Catholic education provides an opportunity for a human being to grow and develop in an environment which takes its values from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Catholic education is focused on continuing the mission of Jesus Christ and building up the kingdom of God.

As a Catholic diocesan secondary school, Holy Family Secondary School is a living expression of a long and varied tradition of education inspired by the life of Christ. The dignity of the human person as a child of God called to work with other persons in creating an inclusive community in service of the common good, where knowledge is sought and respected while faith is nurtured and challenged is of very significant importance in the life of the school.

As a Catholic diocesan secondary school, Holy Family Secondary School values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities. Our school seeks to build a quality learning community that welcomes, and bears witness to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of Christ's teachings. Holy Family Secondary School, accepts all students irrespective of their Religious beliefs. All students will be treated equally with their personal beliefs being fully respected and nurtured in so far as is possible. These are encapsulated in the core values which are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our school.

- (a) Promoting the holistic development of each member of the school community including the spiritual, moral, emotional, social, intellectual, physical and human aspects;
- (b) Striving to excel in teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom;
- (c) Creating a caring school community that celebrates its diversity and keeps partnership and inclusion at the centre of all of its activities;
- (d) Encouraging effective leadership, especially Christian leadership, at all levels;
- (e) Continuing the ministry of Jesus Christ through nurturing a faith community.

Our Catholic school is an inclusive community underpinned by the interaction and collaboration of its stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, and members of the Board of Management. Furthermore, our school draws on the rich resources of the local community and contributes to the life of that community.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Holy Family Secondary School is an all-girls school and will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned\*
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,  
or
- (i) 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.

\*Holy Family Secondary School is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

Holy Family Secondary School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits students of Roman Catholic denomination in preference to others.

Holy Family Secondary School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes Catholic religious' values and does not discriminate in relation to the admission of students where it refuses to admit as a student where the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Holy Family Secondary School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation 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.

Holy Family Secondary School will comply with any direction served on the Board or the Patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

#### 4. Special and Additional Educational Needs

Holy Family Secondary School is committed to the concept of inclusion. The school is committed to the provision of an educational programme which will meet the needs of all the students enrolled in the school, in so far as it is practicable.

In order to provide for candidates with special and additional needs, the principal shall;

- a. Request to meet the parents to discuss the candidate's needs and the school's capability to meet those needs
- b. Request a copy of the candidate's medical/psychological / educational reports
- c. Request from the Department of Education and Skills the necessary resources to meet the needs of the candidate, e.g. Special Needs Assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, learning support, or transport

#### HFSS Admissions Policy: Availability of Resources

Admission to HFSS for all candidates is subject to the availability of resources in the school, including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources, and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission. Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any candidate, it shall make every effort to secure those resources.

#### 5. Admission of Students

**HFSS accepts applications from girls only.** A candidate shall be considered eligible to apply for admission into 1<sup>st</sup> year:

- If she has completed sixth class in primary school or a recognised equivalent
- If she is willing, together with her parents(s)/guardian(s) to accept the Roman Catholic Faith ethos of HFSS
- If she is willing, together with her parent(s)/guardian(s), to accept in writing, and to comply fully with, HFSS Code of Behaviour.
- If she is willing, with the agreement of her parents/guardians, to do Transition Year (4<sup>th</sup> year). Transition Year is mandatory in HFSS.

This school shall admit each student seeking admission **except where** –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details)
- b) 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 them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student.
- c) Holy Family Secondary School provides education exclusively for girls and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the gender provided for by this school.

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any student in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could include the following:

- d) The student has special needs such that, even with the additional resources available from the Department of Education and Science, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.
- e) the student poses an unacceptable health and safety risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

## 6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, Holy Family Secondary School will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those \*eligible applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

(Note: \* Department of Education Post Primary eligibility - in order to be eligible for enrolment applicants must have completed 6th Class (or its equivalent) and have reached the age of 12 years on the 1st January in the calendar year following entry to second level).

### Pupils will be offered places strictly in the following order:

1. Applicants who have a sister who is registered as a student of the school (including 6<sup>th</sup> year students) at the time of application.
2. Applicants who are daughters of employees of Holy Family Secondary School for at least two years at the time of application, holding a non-casual contract of employment.
3. All other eligible applicants will be considered and offered places, if available, once applications are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice.

### **Excess of Applicants**

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in criteria category 3 above (the number of applicants in category 3 exceed the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

- Places will be filled on the basis of random selection. Unsuccessful applicants within each category will be placed on the waiting list with the applicants' rankings on the waiting list determined on the basis of random selection. The random selection will be conducted by an Admissions Committee appointed by the Board of Management. Applicants who are unsuccessful in a particular category will be accounted for in the subsequent category for which they are eligible.
- In respect of siblings (twins, triplets etc. apply) from the same family, Holy Family Secondary School will treat the application as single application in the monitored lottery.
- When all places are filled, names of applicants will continue to be drawn to establish the order of the Waiting List.
- If a vacancy arises it will be offered to the applicant highest on the waiting list.

## 7. 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:

- a) A student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service including naíonraí.
- b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude; other than in relation to admission to a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned;
- d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- e) a requirement that a student, or her parent(s)/guardian(s), attend an interview, open-day or other meeting as a condition of admission.
- f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of her family attending or having previously attended the school *other than*: applicants who have a sister who is registered as a student of the school (including 6<sup>th</sup> year students) at the time of application.
- g) 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.**

## 8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Holy Family Secondary 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 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 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.

## 9. 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.

It is the responsibility of parent(s) at all times during the application process to ensure that the school has the proper and current postal and mobile phone number contact details.

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 below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Holy Family Secondary 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 are 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.

**Applicants should be aware that failure to disclose this information on the acceptance of a place may lead to an offer being withdrawn by the school.**

#### **11. 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 Holy Family Secondary School where -

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.
- (v) The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the board of management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility. An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.



## **12. 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 data 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 list of the students in relation to whom -

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (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 name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

## **13. 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 Holy Family Secondary 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 Holy Family Secondary 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.

## **14. 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.

Late applications in any year will only be considered after all on-time applications have been processed.

Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list.

### **15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year (transfer applications)**

The following section relates to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, and to students who wish to transfer into 1<sup>st</sup> Year after the start of the school year, provided no waiting list is in place from the initial enrolment process as outlined in Section 13.

Where a waiting list is in place, applicants for 1<sup>st</sup> Year will be added to the end of the waiting list, provided the application is made in accordance with all other procedures and criteria detailed in this policy. While it is appreciated that in certain exceptional circumstances transfers are unavoidable (e.g. a change of residence or a family moving into the area) as a matter of general policy transfers into the school are discouraged in the overall interests of the continuity of the student's education.

The Board of Management has delegated the Principal to decide on applications for enrolment. Applicants then have the right to appeal that decision in writing to the Board of Management, and subsequently to the Department of Education, if necessary. The following criteria will be used;

- The school's Admissions Policy
- The school being satisfied with the reason(s) for transfer
- The school regarding the move to be in the best interest of the student seeking transfer/enrolment
- The school regarding the move to be in the best interest of students currently enrolled in the school
- Consideration of issues relating to mid-year/mid-programme transfer such as class sizes, subject options, schedule of Classroom Based Assessments and availability of resources.
- The school must be satisfied that it can meet in full the curriculum needs of the applicant wishing to transfer with regard to subject options/levels and that it can provide a full timetabled curriculum
- The applicant has sufficient background in subjects to be able to progress.
- Students seeking to transfer will not be considered for enrolment into year groups due for State Examination the following June (3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Year). This is in order to ensure we can adequately meet students' needs, ensure all elements of the required curriculum are covered, and to know the student individually should difficulties arise, particularly around examination time. However, in such cases transfer students may, if deemed appropriate, be afforded the opportunity to apply for admission into 2<sup>nd</sup> /TY /5<sup>th</sup> Year, subject to the criteria outlined in this policy.

In submitting an application, the applicant and their parents/guardians are confirming that they have read, and agree to adhere to, the school's ethos and mission, Admissions Policy, Code of Behaviour and Data Protection Policy.

Before Enrolment Application Forms will be issued for admission of students to other years and during the school year, applicants and their parent(s)/guardian(s) may be required to meet with a member of the senior management team. This is to help determine whether or not the school can meet the individual curriculum

needs of the applicant as well as their personal, social and emotional needs, in line with our mission and ethos.

School management may contact the current and all former post-primary school(s) attended by the applicant. In the case of application for 1<sup>st</sup> Year, outside of the standard annual intake process outlined above beginning on page 2, the former primary school(s) will also be contacted. Applicants may then submit an Enrolment Application Form.

Applications will only be deemed complete once the following documentation has been received by the school.

1. Completed Enrolment Application Form.
2. School reports from previous two years (previous year if applicant has only completed 1<sup>st</sup> Year).
3. Copies of Junior/Leaving Certificate result/equivalent exams from abroad (where applicable).
4. Copy of applicant's birth certificate.
5. Transfer Information Form - on receipt of 1 to 4 above, Holy Family Secondary School will forward a Transfer Information Form to the applicant's current school through the parent/guardian and, where relevant, all former post-primary schools. The Transfer Information Form includes, but is not limited to, information on behaviour, attendance, student/family supports and academic progress. It forms part of the application process.

**N.B. It is the responsibility of the applicant to furnish the school with 1 to 4 above and ensure the previous school forwards the completed Transfer Information Form.**

Once an application is deemed complete (receipt of 1 – 5 above) the school will process the application in line with this Admissions Policy and the relevant legislation.

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

The Board of Management of Holy Family Secondary School or any persons acting on its behalf shall not, except in accordance with section 64 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of –

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

#### **17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious education**

A parent of a student, or a student who has reached the age of 18, who wishes to attend Holy Family Secondary School without attending religious education should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how that request may be accommodated by the school.

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian 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).

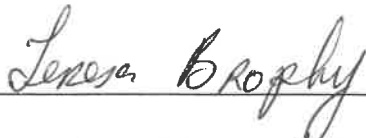
Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management).

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.

**The Board of Management will review this policy periodically.**


**This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024.**

Signed:   
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024

Signed:   
(Diocesan Representative)

Date: 23 April 2024

Signed:   
(Principal)

Date: 23 April 2024

