

# STUDENT ADMISSIONS POLICY

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Approved by	Main Board via EWS Committee
Lead Officer	Head of Student Services
Senior Manager responsible	Vice Principal for Student Experience and Progression

## **Student Admissions Policy and Procedure**

### **1. Scope of Policy**

We are committed to ensuring that course choices and offers are in the best educational interest of an individual learner, enabling them to both achieve and progress in terms personal skills and academic development.

The College welcomes applications from all students who meet our entry requirements on Level 2 and Level 3 courses and who fulfil ESFA eligibility (please note that all students are expected to enrol on a full-time programme as defined by Education Skills Funding Agency [ESFA] guidelines).

This policy defines the arrangements which cover the admission of applicants and progression of existing students, ensuring that an applicant's education needs are met. It is intended to ensure a consistent approach is used across the College and that best practice is followed.

The admissions process is intended to provide a way for information to be exchanged between the applicant, the student services team and curriculum which covers the following areas:

- The applicant has access to information about the course they are applying for
- The applicant has the academic ability and aptitude for the course they have selected
- The needs of applicants with disabilities (either visible or invisible) and/or learning needs are identified so that appropriate adjustments can be made
- The applicant understands the content and assessment methods of the course/subjects selected
- Referral for impartial advice and guidance on alternative courses where the applicant is unsuccessful, or the course is not appropriate
- The applicant has access to impartial careers information advice and guidance from a qualified careers advisor.

### **Eligibility**

Eligibility criteria are determined by the Department for Education [DfE] through the ESFA. Most young people legally residing in England will be eligible to enrol for a 16 to 19 study programme; there are some exceptions however, that relate to residency.

Applicants are required to confirm, or not, on the application/enrolment form they have legally lived in the UK for the three previous years. For those applicants who do not meet this test, the College will take steps to satisfy itself that the applicant is legally resident in the UK. This is a requirement that must be satisfied before funding can be granted by the Government, it should be noted that student and funding records are subject to DfE funding audits.

### **Residency**

EU students should be able to show proof of Settled Status through the Settled Status Scheme by providing the 'share code'. Where an applicant is residing on an Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), Permanent Residency (PR) Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) VISA the applicant will be contacted to request that they provide their passport or biometric identity card and their VISA.

An applicant's VISA will require a minimum of an 18 month term remaining to progress their application.

All students, as part of enrolment, must agree to respect and support the Christian character of the College before their place is confirmed.

Where the College is able to provide a programme of study appropriate to a young person's needs, prospective students are admitted to the College and allocated to courses on the basis of the following priorities:

#### **Category 1**

- All members of the Catholic community (including pupils of the Catholic Collegiate schools)
- Those students who have been identified as having 'Special Educational Needs' on their Education, Health and Social Care Plan, where the College is named as the preferred setting, and
- Any young people who are in, or have recently left, the care of the Local Authority

#### **Category 2**

- Those from supportive religious backgrounds and others happy to be educated in an environment which values and promotes Christian ideals.

## **2. Admissions Procedure**

**2.1** The College seeks to ensure that the applications for places at the College are handled fairly and that they are dealt with in accordance with the Admissions Policy.

- a) Students submit online application forms from October in the year prior to admission.
- b) A verbal or written response is given to applications, including information on arranging an individual New Student Meeting, within two working weeks following receipt of an application.
- c) Either a firm or grade conditional offer will be made of a place at the College, or the candidate may be placed on a waiting list following their New Student Meeting. They may also have their application deferred until we receive more required information, such as a school report, EHC plan or proof of ID. At this stage students are offered a place at College, rather than on their chosen courses. Confirmation of courses happens at enrolment once students have received their results and we can confirm entry criteria has been met.
- d) An email giving a decision about the application will be sent within one working week of the New Student Meeting or all requested information being received.
- e) Pre-enrolment advice, guidance and information will be offered during the meeting and through the marketing events and materials available, as well as during Open Evenings and WelcomeFest.
- f) The enrolment procedure will take place shortly after the publication of GCSE examination results and provides students with a further series of opportunities to gather information and to make informed decisions.

- g) At enrolment, advice, information and guidance will be given in order to allow students to be placed on programmes of study which best match their needs and abilities.
- h) A minimum enrolment total is required for a class to run. The College reserves the right to cancel or change a class, subject or programme if the minimum enrolment total is not achieved, or due to changes beyond our control.

## 2.2 Waiting List

If, at any point in the year, the College Leadership Team believes that the number of acceptances is likely to exceed the number of planned places available (taking into account an estimate of the number of returning students and the average annual conversion rate) , a waiting list will be brought into operation.

The Waiting List procedure will be:

- Applications received after the agreed target number has been reached will be added to the waiting list.
- They will be invited to a New Student Meeting in the usual manner.
- If the interviewer feels they should be offered a place, the offer letter will inform them that they are on a waiting list, invite them to confirm their Category 1 or 2 status, and register their willingness to continue with the application. Category 1 students should have St. Brendan's as their first choice, Category 2 can have St. Brendan's as second choice or lower.
- Once the reply is received, applicants will be sent details of how the waiting list procedure will operate.
- A separate waiting list of Category 1 and Category 2 applicants will be set up, listed in date order of acceptance.
- As withdrawals occur during the year, or additional places are agreed, applicants will be taken off the waiting list in priority order, and informed in writing that they have been moved from the waiting list and have a place, and they will then be treated as other applicants in terms of enrolment.

## Waiting List Priorities

Places will be offered to applicants on the waiting list in this order:

- a. **Category 1 students** in date order of their date of acceptance, where there are places on all the courses they have applied for
- b. **Category 1 students** in date order of their acceptance, where there are places on some courses they have applied for, if they wish to choose alternative courses that are not full

If all the above Category 1 applicants have places, remaining places will be offered in this order:

- c. **Category 2 students** in date order of acceptance, where there are places on all the courses they have applied for
- d. **Category 2 students** in date order of their acceptance, where there are places on some courses

they have applied for, if they wish to choose alternative courses that are not full

### **2.3 New Student Meeting Aims**

St. Brendan's recognises the importance of students receiving good quality advice, guidance and information in order for them to make the best choice for their future. The aim of the New Student Meetings is for the College to help applicants decide on a programme of study that will help them develop and progress onto their chosen career path or progression plan. Interviewers will use an applicant's predicted grades, school report and future ambitions in order to advise them of a suitable programme of study.

If an applicant has access needs, these will be discussed with the applicant at the New Student Meeting in order to ascertain reasonable adjustments and support requirements which may need to be put in place to support them in their studies.

If an applicant does not meet the entry criteria for either the level of course they are applying for, or for one or more of their chosen courses, alternative options will be discussed.

New Student Meetings also give the opportunity for applicants to ask questions they may have about their courses or the College and the interviewers will provide key information about open events, enrolment and College life. Applicants will also be signposted to information on the College website.

Parents and carers are welcome to attend the meeting to support their child but we do encourage applicants themselves to lead in conversations where this is appropriate.

#### **Overseas qualifications**

We welcome applications from students studying overseas qualifications. However, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide proof that their qualifications are GCSE equivalent, including satisfying English language requirements. This may be done by providing certification from Ecctis.

### **2.4 Applicants offered a Place:**

The applicant has 10 days in which to accept the offer. If the offer is not accepted during this timeframe, the College reserves the right to offer the place to another applicant if contact has not been made.

### **2.5 Applicants not offered a Place:**

The College is committed to inclusion and to the provision of appropriate support through its admission procedure. There are circumstances where an applicant may not be offered a place under the following circumstances:

- They do not meet the entry criteria for their chosen courses, or
- Their school attendance record shows persistent absence without due cause, or
- There are significant behavioural concerns in school reports or references which may disrupt the work of other students or staff, even if support managements were made, or
- They have already completed Level 3 study elsewhere, or

- There may be a safeguarding issue which poses a high risk to the College, staff and/or students, or
- The College is unable to meet specific support needs of a student, or
- The College has previously excluded the applicants from its studies and is unable to minimise risks associated with their re-admission into College, or
- If they are applying to transfer into the second year of a course but have studied different exam boards. If the exam boards are the same, admission is at the discretion of the College and subject to a satisfactory reference from their current provider.

### **3. Appeals**

Any appeal against an admissions decision should be made in writing to the Head of Student Services within 5 working days of the decision being made. They will consider whether or not the initial decision was made in line with the Policy and Procedure and will respond as to whether or not they uphold the appeal within 5 working days.

If the complainant is still not happy with the decision, a further appeal can be made to the Principal, in writing, within 10 working days of the appeal decision being received. The Principal will contact the complainant and carry out a further investigation and will either uphold or overturn the initial decision. All discussions and meetings will be recorded and the outcome will be notified within ten working days of receiving the appeal.

This is in line with Stage 3 of the Formal Complaints Procedure, and from this stage, that process should be followed.

#### **Grounds for Appeal**

The applicant will be able to exercise their right to appeal under the following conditions:

- The Admissions Policy was not applied correctly and that any procedural irregularity has disadvantaged the applicant significantly to make the decision unsound.
- Prejudice or bias on the part of one or more decision maker took place during the admissions procedure and can be proven or there are reasonable grounds to support the perception of prejudice or bias.

Disagreement with a decision based upon academic judgement will not be considered as grounds for appeal.

### **4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment**

The College is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all students and applicants and welcomes applications from all, regardless of age, disability, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation.

Title of policy, practice, activity or proposed decision:	Admissions Policy
Department:	Student Experience & Progression
Assessor(s) and job title:	Vice Principal for Student Experience & Progression
Who is responsible for this activity / decision / policy:	Vice Principal for Student Experience & Progression
Date of assessment:	01.05.22
What are the aims and intended effects of this policy, project or function:	To ensure there is a fair and transparent application process and entry criteria that every potential applicant must follow. The policy details all the information the College will require to assess if an applicant satisfies its entry criteria.
Who will the policy, project or function affect	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff: the policy explains to all staff the College's entry requirements and the criteria applicants have to satisfy to be offered a place. <input type="checkbox"/> Students, parents/carers: the policy outlines the College's entry criteria and the minimum entry required for applicants. The policy also presents the application and offer process that the applicant has to follow. <input type="checkbox"/> Governors: the policy explains the stages in the application process and the criteria applicants are required to satisfy. This enables Governors to approve the admissions process and criteria for entry to the College. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers (including Agency, Contractors etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify): Stakeholders: schools with potential applicants within a commutable distance are able to provide application advice and guidance to their students based on the information included within the policy.

### Equality Considerations

This is the core of the Equality Impact Analysis; what information do you have considering any potential or existing impact on protected groups, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Consideration should also be given regarding wider inequalities that people may experience because of social, domestic, environmental and economic circumstances, e.g. carers.

Protected characteristic	Impact	Summarise the reasoning behind your findings, and any evidence you have drawn upon in coming to that conclusion.
Age	Neutral	Applicants are between the ages of 16-18 predominately as admissions decisions are based on funding requirements set by the ESFA. Some

		applicants will be 19 and an admission decision will be based on the eligibility criteria set by the ESFA.
Disability	Neutral	The College is committed to welcoming applications from prospective students with disabilities or specific learning needs. Where barriers to prior achievement may have been experienced, the policy includes that the College reserves the right to make discretionary offers to applicants who may not have fully satisfied the criteria. Special consideration can be given to students with additional learning needs and disabilities.
Gender Re-assignment	Neutral	The College is committed to welcoming applications from prospective students with specific support needs. All applicants are given equal consideration on the basis of their academic merit and potential.
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy	Neutral	Special consideration can also be given to student parents and discretionary offers made if an applicant does not fully satisfy the College's entry criteria.
Race (incl. ethnicity, nationality & skin colour)	Neutral	
Religion or belief	Potential	As a Catholic College, we operate a category 1 for those applicants who are members of the Catholic Community. Applicants who are from non-faith or other religious backgrounds are asked to confirm they are happy to be educated in an environment which values and promotes Christian ideals.
Sex	Neutral	The College is committed to welcoming applications from prospective students regardless of their gender. All applicants are given equal consideration on the basis of their academic merit and potential.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	
Other considerations	Neutral	The College is committed to supporting students who are care leavers or young carers. Applicants are asked to share this information during the application stage so the Learning Development team can put in place the necessary support.

#### 4.1 Support with Transition

The following group of students, where they meet the entry criteria, will be invited to attend a Transition Support Event and may be invited in for a follow-up support planning meeting:

- Home, hospital or other interrupted education



- EHC Plan/High Needs Funding
- Children in Care or Care Leavers
- Young Carers
- Any applicants with identified mental or physical health issues

Any student who identifies themselves as having a learning or other support need, will be sent a self-assessment form to complete and return. The information on this form will be transferred to our system and students will be asked to attend a Transition Support Event. They can also request a support planning meeting to ensure transition to College is as effective as possible.

## **5. Enrolment**

During enrolment, the College ensures students' understanding of the College's terms and conditions by providing all enrolled students with a copy of their Enrolment Confirmation and Learning Agreement. Enrolment Confirmation and Learning Agreements can be provided in alternative formats should they be required.

## **6. Resources**

Staff will have a responsibility to support College admissions throughout the year. For example, by providing advice during college events such as new student days, taster days, open events and progression activities.

All information relating to admissions will be recorded on a college system and processed in line with the College's Privacy Notice.

## **7. Monitoring**

The College monitors its progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks using the Compass Assessment tool which reviews the careers education provision across the College. Detail from this monitoring informs our planning and identifies areas in which we need to implement changes.

Destinations of our students are gathered at three points of their 2 year study programme and their actual destination in the year after they have completed their studies. This information is used to support our admissions process for next academic year and areas for development.

Regular monitoring of College systems provides data relating to the admission process with additional information provided after open days, interview events and progression activities. Student voice feedback is gathered about their experience of enrolment and through regular, ongoing student surveys.

## **8. Linked policies / procedures / regulatory and legislation guidance**

- SEND Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Safeguarding Policy

- Careers Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- 16-19 Education Funding Guidance, issued by the ESFA
- Guidance on Equality Act 2010, DfE issued June 2018