



**2024 - 2025**



## **Admission Policy of Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ**

**South Circular Road, Limerick**

**Roll number: 64260M**

**School Patron: Le Chéile Schools Trust**

### **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 patron on 18<sup>th</sup> September 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 Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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.

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

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust.

The purpose of a Le Chéile school is to provide an education that acknowledges and affirms the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God - "The glory of God is humanity fully alive" (St Irenaeus). It embraces the intellectual, physical, cultural, emotional, social, moral and spiritual growth of each student.

Our school seeks to build a learning community that welcomes, and witnesses to, the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the Le Chéile Charter. The school draws on the richness of the religious and cultural heritage of the past and the charism of the *founder* Marie Madeline d'Houet of *the Faithful Companions of Jesus* who founded this school.

Our school is committed to creating a place of inclusivity, equality, and openness, where people can live with and learn from one another, however diverse our background and experience might be. It does not discriminate on religious grounds and is open to students from diverse backgrounds. It offers educational opportunities which promote excellence so that students can respond responsibly to their own lives, the lives of others and to the earth, which is our common home.

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is central to our curriculum. Alongside Religious Education the school supports students in their Catholic religious formation. All students' spiritual growth is enhanced through areas such as nature, art, poetry, and music. The spiritual life of students can also be deepened through prayer and ritual.

*In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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.*

The general objectives of all Le Chéile schools include:

**Welcome** recognises the unique dignity and worth of each person.

**Wisdom** is the pursuit of a greater understanding and appreciation of the world.

**Witness** comes from the expression of Gospel values, in everyday life, and recognises that every person is made in the image and likeness of God.

## **Philosophy of Education**

Companionship is central to the FCJ Philosophy of Education. It is particularly expressed through faithfulness, gentleness, and respect, in the spirit of the FCJ Foundress, Marie Madeleine d’Houet. The school seeks to create a caring atmosphere in which all can find a place and feel valued, the uniqueness of each person is respected, and all are invited to use their gifts for the service of others, for the transformation of society and the coming of the reign of God.

All education programmes and activities emphasise the formation of the whole person. The FCJ school community seeks to provide a stimulating and supportive environment, encouraging all to develop their full potential, with a special care for those deprived in any way.

Responsible citizenship, cultural identity, care for the environment and peace that does justice are fundamental principles in FCJ educational philosophy. On-going reflection, evaluation and innovation ensure that the school responds constructively to the needs of a contemporary world.

Each member of the school community is committed to work in the light of Gospel values and in response to Jesus cry “I thirst” as spoken in the world today. Mary, mother of God has a special place in FCJ tradition and in our schools. Through “finding God in all things”, FCJ schools strive to be nurturers of life and joyful messengers of hope and love, inspired by the mission of Jesus:

### **3. Admission Statement**

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

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

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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.

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

#### **Single gender schools**

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ is an all-girls school and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit a boy applying for admission to this school.

#### **Post-primary denominational schools**

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of particular religious denomination concerned in preference to others.

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

Students with special education needs are welcome in Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ. The establishment of a class to provide an education exclusively for students with special education needs, has not been approved by the Minister for Education and Skills.

#### **5. Admission of Students**

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 him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

### **A school that admits students of one gender only**

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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.

### **All denominational schools**

Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ is a catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the catholic denomination where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

## **6. 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:

**An Open Evening is held early in the school year for all prospective female students and their parents/guardians.**

- 1. Completion of an Application Form obtained from the school.**
- 2. Completed a full course in primary education and have reached the age of 12 years on the 1<sup>st</sup> January in the calendar year following the student's entry to first year. (A Birth Certificate may be required to determine this, following the offer of a place).**
- 3. Sisters of current and past students**
- 4. Daughters of school staff who are employed by Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ at the time of enrolment.**
- 5. Daughters of parents who attended Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ (This criterion applies to a maximum of 25% of places only) No such right of entry (Category 3, 4 & 5) shall be given to any applicant who designates a school other than Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ as her school of first choice on the Limerick Area Post-Primary Schools Common Application form for the year of such application.**
- 6. The remainder of the First-Year intake, the number may vary from year to year, and is determined by the Board of Management, will be taken from the list of applications in the order of the waiting list.**
- 7. 116 students will be taken for year 2024-2025**

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:

**There is a process of random selection for all remaining students, in the priority category, applicants who are not sisters of current and past students or daughters of staff, or daughters of past pupils of Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ. The Board of Management will appoint an Admissions Committee immediately prior, to the Random Selection.**

**In the case of twins, triplets, each sibling must make a separate application. If a twin or triplet is selected in the random selection process, the sibling will also receive a place should a place be available at that stage of the process.**

## **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:

Points (a) to (g) must be included here by all schools. There are limited exceptions to some of these and schools must retain the exceptions that apply to them and delete those that do not:

- (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;
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, 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 his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;  
(1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents of a student having attended the school.
- (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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- 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.

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 Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ, 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.

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 Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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 his or her 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 Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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 Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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 applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application not later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. 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**

Where parents wish to make an application for their daughter to a year group other than First Year or during the school year, they should in the first instance fill in an Application Form. An offer of a place can only be made if there is space in the year group in question. A decision on whether a place can be offered will be conveyed to the parents within 21 days of the initial application. Applications made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year will be deferred until the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend, in turn, on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year group. Such applications will be placed on a waiting list until the number of available places in the relevant year group has been established by the Principal.

Before accepting the offer of a place in the school the parents and their daughter may be invited to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ascertain whether there is a place available in the particular subject classes required by their daughter. The fact that there may be a space in a year group would not automatically mean that there is a place available in a particular subject class at the level required by the student. This is because class size is limited in certain subjects. For this reason, parents and their daughter are strongly recommended to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal to ensure that a transfer to the school would be in the best interests of their daughter given the curricular provision, subject choices/levels available at the time.

Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant to a year group other than First Year or during the school year:

The parents must confirm their acceptance in writing of an offer of a place within three weeks of the date of the offer of a place.

In accepting an offer of admission from Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ, the parents must indicate—

(i) whether or not they have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) whether or not they have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, they must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

Parents 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.

Circumstances in which offers of a place in a year group other than First Year or during the school year may not be made or may be withdrawn:

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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 within three weeks of the date of the offer of a place;

(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;

(iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out above;

(v) 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. 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; or

(vi) the application is made for a place in Transition Year or Fifth Year in the forthcoming academic year before the Principal has established the number of available spaces in each of these year groups, which will depend on the number of existing Third Year students who progress to either year.

### **Oversubscription to the year group other than First Year:**

In the event of there being more applications to the year group other than First Year than places available, a waiting list of students, whose application for admission to the particular year group has been refused, will be compiled, and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list will be in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy see Section 6 above. If there are two or more students in any of the selection criteria categories set out in Section 6 above, then the position on the waiting list (for places in a year group other than First year) will be determined by a lottery process overseen by the Principal, Deputy Principal and an independent observer appointed by the Board of Management.

Offers of any subsequent places in the year group other than First Year that become available during the school year 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.

### **Sharing of Data with other schools:**

Applicants should note that the provisions of Section 12 above relating to the sharing of data with other schools will apply in all cases where an application is made to a year group other than First Year or during the school year.

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 his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

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

The Board of Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ 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. 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.