

## **Admission Policy of Castlerea Community School**

**School Address: Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, F45 ER02**

**Roll number: 91493P**

**School Patron/s: Sisters of Mercy, GRETB**



### **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 24 August 2020. 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 Castlerea Community School's 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.

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

### **CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT**

Castlerea School Community is a co-educational/all girls/all boys multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of The Sisters of Mercy and Galway-Roscommon Education and Training Board.

Community Schools provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within their community. Community Schools may also provide for life-long learning within their local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust following an amalgamation of the Convent of Mercy Secondary School and the Vocational School and opened in September 1993. The values of Galway-Roscommon ETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Sisters of Mercy are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

The core values of Castlerea Community School are care, respect, community, inclusion, equality, justice and fairness. These values combine to provide and support an atmosphere which is conducive to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to assist each student to reach his/ her full potential in a calm, caring and creative environment.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000. Once enrolled, Castlerea Community School provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community.

Castlerea Community School provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In Castlerea Community School we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

### **Principles underpinning the Characteristic Spirit of Castlerea Community School:**

In accordance with Section 8 (5) of the Education Act 1998, The Provincial of the Sisters of Mercy (Western Province) and the Chief Executive of the Galway and Roscommon E.T.B. (formerly Co Roscommon V.E.C.) are deemed to be the Joint Patrons of Castlerea Community School.

The school is multi-denominational, recognising all Christian faiths, other non-Christian faiths and those with no faith and will operate in accordance with the Deed of Trust for Community Schools and with relevant legislation.

Castlerea Community School is an active partnership between the Joint Patrons, Board of Management, Parents/ Guardians, Students, Staff and our local community. The school is committed to providing the best educational environment, where quality and excellence in teaching and learning can take place in an atmosphere of openness and inclusiveness for all.

Cognizant of the guiding heritage and traditions of the Joint Patrons, Castlerea Community School will strive to be a living expression of a long and varied tradition of education that emphasises the dignity of the human person as understood by Christians, other religions and non-believers. Parity of esteem is guaranteed to students of all other beliefs and none. All traditions will be reflected in the day to day operation of the school, and individual faiths will be nurtured. The school will be an inclusive community of service to the common good where knowledge is sought and respected. It will serve the community by providing an education of the highest quality open to all eligible children of Castlerea and surrounding areas.

This Community School will strive to be a model of freedom, justice and love in its administration, teaching and relationships between educators, learners, parents and community.

Combining instruction in academic and practical subjects, the school will aim to contribute to the full spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical well-being and development of its students.

Time for the teaching of religious education, as agreed and stated in the *“Deed of Trust and Model Lease for Community Schools”*, will be respected and accommodated within the educational programmes offered within the school.

The characteristic spirit of the school will be one of openness, welcome, inclusiveness, responsiveness and safety. It will be a place where students are cherished equally, regardless of ability, gender, creed, class or ethnic background. The school’s atmosphere and environment will be characterised by a spirit of honesty, appreciation, respect, tolerance, integrity, courtesy, responsibility, self-discipline, fairness and forgiveness.

The school will aim to nurture a spirit of intellectual inquiry and academic endeavour in the students. It will also encourage a sense of personal direction and purpose, a desire to use their gifts for the common good and the moral courage to make the world a better place.

The school will strive to respond sensitively to the individual educational and pastoral needs of the students. This will involve close collaboration between the school and the parents and guardians of each student.

The school will aim to work in collaboration and co-operation with the local community, with the school being a resource for the local community and the local community being a resource for the school.

The school is a caring and welcoming one which accepts that all are part of a community of diverse individuals.

The school is committed to the promotion of spiritual and human development. The school is a faith community of welcome and hospitality where values are lived and there is special care for those most in need.

The school fosters the promotion of good relationships, focusing on the growth and development of everyone in a unique way, in an atmosphere of firmness and fairness.

All in the school community seek to act justly and responsibly in their relationships with each other.

The school community respects always the unique and intrinsic value of every person.

The school is actively inclusive of newcomers, those with special needs, those from minority groups or ethnic backgrounds and those who may be socially or financially disadvantaged. The school will achieve this in a spirit of equality, harmony and friendship.

The school will endeavour to foster and facilitate adult and continuing education, in accordance with the needs of the local community.

The school, through its curricular and extra- curricular provision, aims to promote an awareness of those in need, both in the local community and globally and to promote an awareness of our fragile environment and the need to protect same.

The school promotes the partnership between home and school by encouraging Parents/Guardians to support fully their student's learning. The school also endeavours to encourage maximum communication between home and school through its Board of Management approved policies and procedures.

The school aims to cooperate fully with all relevant agencies to develop initiatives to overcome the problem of educational disadvantage.

The school promotes on-going personal and professional development among its staff.

Castlerea Community School will endeavour to address, meet and deliver the educational needs of the local community of Castlerea.

### **EQUALITY AND RESPECT**

- All members of our school community are cherished equally, regardless of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race or religion,
- Students are encouraged to have respect for themselves, to recognise and nurture their own strengths and gifts. Each student is encouraged to acknowledge and accept their own individuality.
- The school through its Code of Behaviour (Discipline), promotes a positive atmosphere of self – discipline,
- The school promotes respect for others in a spirit of mutual acceptance, care and friendship, while recognising the rich diversity of the individuals who make up our school community,
- The school Code of Behaviour (Discipline) and Anti-Bullying policy promote a safe and positive environment for all those in the school community. Both policies are promoted and adhered to in a spirit that is positive, firm and fair to all,
- The school develops local policies that clearly clarify, articulate and communicate to all members of the school community, on how the school manages all aspects of activities within the school,
- The School fosters positive relationships and good communication with the local community which will be mutually beneficial to all, and
- Castlerea Community School endeavours to create a healthy respect and awareness among its students for the school environment, that of the surrounding community and the fragile universal environment.

### **COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM**

***Subject to the allocation and provision of adequate resources as provided for in the Education Act 1998 -***

Castlerea Community School will endeavour to promote excellence in teaching and learning.

The school aim to provide a comprehensive curriculum, available equally and equitably to all.

The school aims to develop the whole person, through the provision of a wide and varied curriculum. The school is aims to instil in its students a strong work ethic where they are motivated through supportive competition to achieve their personal ambitions.

The school aims to identify the individual needs of students, including those who are gifted and those with special educational needs. It will endeavour to tailor programmes and curriculum to cater for identified individual needs.

The school promotes inclusivity through the curriculum for those assigned to special classes by integrating such students into mainstream in so far as possible and for their benefit.

The school, through the provision of extra-curricular activities, aims to develop everyone's strengths and interests. The aim through this provision is to promote a sense of teamwork and cooperation, unity and a sense of pride in our school.

The Joint Trustees/Patrons wish all associated with Castlerea Community School every success in their respective roles within the school community.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Castlerea Community School 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.

#### 4. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 5](#) 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

#### 5. 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:

1. Students must be aged 12 on 1<sup>st</sup> January on the calendar year following the child's entry into first year. Evidence of age, normally a Birth Certificate, will be required and a copy of which will be retained on school/files/records
2. Students who have or had a brother or sister in the school.
3. Students residing in the catchment area of CCS
4. Children of current staff of Castlerea Community School.
5. Students permanently attending the Primary Schools of the catchment area.
6. Applications from students residing outside the catchment area, to be decided by the student's postcode.

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:

Random selection by means of a "draw" will be used to allocate any remaining places in this instance. The names of those students who are tied for remaining place or places will be placed in a draw and the appropriate number of students will be drawn.

## 6. 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) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school; (other than in relation to a plc or further education and training course run by the school in respect of those courses)
- (b) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (c) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (d) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission; (other than in the case of admission to a plc or further education and training course run by the school)
- (e) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; (other than, in the case where the selection criteria is based on siblings of a student attending or having attended the school)
- (f) 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).

## 7. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Castlerea Community School 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 13](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 14](#) 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.



## **8. 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 17](#) below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Castlerea Community 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.

## **10. 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 Castlerea Community 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 9](#) above.

## **11. 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.

## **12. 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 Castlerea Community 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 Castlerea Community 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.

## **13. 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.

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

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

- Applicants, must meet any criteria laid down by the Department of Education & Science from time to time e.g. applicants must not have already spent six years at second-level or apply for a course which would necessarily result in their spending longer than six years at second level.
- The availability of suitable places in any given year group shall be of paramount importance and shall be one of the determining factors of admission.
- The availability of suitable places in individual classes or at a specific level of study (Higher or Ordinary level).

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is

sought, are as follows:

- Applicants, must meet any criteria laid down by the Department of Education & Science from time to time e.g. applicants must not have already spent six years at second-level or apply for a course which would necessarily result in their spending longer than six years at second level.
- The availability of suitable places in any given year group shall be of paramount importance and shall be one of the determining factors of admission.
- The availability of suitable places in individual classes or at a specific level of study (Higher or Ordinary level).

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

The board of Castlerea Community School or any persons acting on its behalf will not 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.

**Note:** Exceptions apply only in relation to admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

### 16. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Castlerea Community School offers *religious education* in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, *religious education* supports the 'multi-denominational' aspect of our school's ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between '*religious education*' and '*religious instruction*':

- *Religious education* is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
- *Religious instruction* is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

## **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.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Castlerea Community School at a meeting on 24 Aug 2020.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Ms. Madeline O'Connell

Chairperson

Date: \_\_\_\_\_