

## **Admission Policy of Dundalk Grammar School CLG**

**The Crescent, Dundalk, County Louth, A91 FH00**

**Roll number: 63920A**

### **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 Governors of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patrons and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school Board of Governors on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020. It is published on the school's website [www.dgs.ie](http://www.dgs.ie) and will be made available in hardcopy, on request.

The relevant dates and timelines for Dundalk Grammar 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 relevant school year.

The application form is available on request from [admissions@dgs.ie](mailto:admissions@dgs.ie)

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

**Dundalk Grammar School is a co-educational, primary/post primary and boarding school with a Church of Ireland ethos.**

Dundalk Grammar School is a co-educational, 5 day boarding and day school founded in 1739, with an historic and valued association with the Church of Ireland. As a Company Limited by guarantee, not for profit, the school is a registered charity controlled by a Board of Governors/Directors, which is representative of the main Protestant denominations. As one of four schools associated with the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant School in Ireland, its primary objective is to provide a boarding or day school education for Protestant children at an affordable cost. While this objective remains in place, over the years, the school has widened its intake by popular demand so that this now includes a substantial complement of students of other Christian denominations and other faiths who have been accepted into our school on the basis that they will agree to respect our values and share our ethos. One of the great strengths of the present school is the harmonious way in which its students of all religious denominations and backgrounds work together in a cohesive, happy community.

### **Characteristic Spirit**

The Protestant characteristic spirit of the school can be seen in many ways:

- by the respect for and observance of Sunday as a holy day when it clashes with school activities and by the avoidance of school involvement with events that involve gambling or substance abuse of any kind;
- dedication of all teachers to the welfare of all students and their commitment to carry out extra duties associated with these students;
- special services are conducted under the auspices of the Church of Ireland Rector of Dundalk and/or the Church of Ireland school Chaplain. These may include services at the beginning and end of the school year and during Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Confirmation, Harvest, and times of bereavement as appropriate;
- daily compulsory assembly for all students combining acts of worship and hymn singing. Resources used include the Book of Common Prayer 2004 and CH 5, and the hymnal of the Church of Ireland;
- provision of a chaplaincy and pastoral care by a member of the Church of Ireland;
- classes in Religious Education are provided for all students and attendance at these is compulsory;
- Church of Ireland confirmation classes are provided: ten classes per year. Attendance at these is obligatory for confirmands. They are conducted by the Rector of Dundalk and the school Chaplain.

All members of the school community, whether resident in the school or otherwise, are required to recognise and support the importance of the boarding tradition within the school.

Dundalk Grammar School sees education as an all-embracing process concerned with the development of the whole person. The aim is to provide a wide education which will enable students to identify and to build on their strengths and talents. By recognising the intrinsic value and needs of each child the school aims to enable all students to achieve their potential by:

- developing intellectual skills, which will enable them to experience the satisfaction to be gained from feeling challenged while learning, drawing on the culture of the past and recognising the needs of the twenty-first century;
- acquiring social and interpersonal skills, which will enable them to relate easily and co-operatively with confidence and thoughtfulness;
- recognising the importance of a healthy life-style and the value of participating enthusiastically in physical and sporting activities;
- experiencing opportunities for creative and artistic expression;
- receiving recognition for their achievements in accordance with their abilities and strengths;
- having access to personal and career guidance and to a supportive structure of pastoral care.

It is expected that all students and their parents/guardians, together with school staff will at all times be supportive of the above Statement of Ethos.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Governors of Dundalk Grammar School as Joint Patrons with the Incorporated Society, shall uphold, and be accountable for upholding the characteristic spirit as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic objectives in the conduction of the school.

Dundalk Grammar 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.

Dundalk Grammar School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b). *Subject to Department of Education adequately funding.*

### **Mission Statement**

The school aims to foster a strong moral code based on Christian principles, foster a sense of community, provide a high quality of education in a sage learning environment and inspire respect and concern for others. Our staff are committed to meeting the needs of our students in the academic, sporting, social and spiritual realms. In this way we strive to produce well educated, well-rounded young people who are tolerant of others, enthusiastic for life, and who will develop to their full potential.

*‘Sapere Aude – Dare to be Wise’*

### **The aims of the Admissions Policy are as follows:**

- to provide a system of allocating the places available in a transparent and equitable manner;
- to reflect the school ethos, the school being under Protestant management, in boarding and the co-educational traditions of the school in determining policies for admission;
- to accept children with the use of an equitable selection test to qualify for entry – notwithstanding the need to accommodate those awarded entrance scholarships or bursaries;
- to achieve a balanced intake which will enhance the effective operation of a co-educational school, (The Governors believe that all students benefit from diversity of values, race, culture, beliefs, traditions, language, ways of life in society and exceptional talent in other students and will consider when offering places);
- to allocate separate categories of places for boarders and day students;
- to provide for children with special educational needs insofar as facilities and resources are available;
- to allow the Headmaster the flexibility to take account of special circumstances as determined by the Board of Governors.

## **2. Admission Statement**

Dundalk Grammar School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

- (a) the gender of the applicant,
- (b) the civil status of the applicant,
- (c) the family status of the applicant,
- (d) the sexual orientation of the applicant,
- (e) the religion of the applicant,

- (f) the physical disability of the applicant,
- (g) the race or ethnicity the applicant concerned, or
- (h) the applicant concerned may have 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.

Dundalk Grammar School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and will not discriminate, but reserves the right to preferentially admit students of a Protestant denomination where it can be demonstrated that to do so is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### 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 Headmaster 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.
- c) a parent(s) of a student refuses to pay the fees levied for education and facility use as previously outlined to them in writing.

Dundalk Grammar School is a Church of Ireland school under Protestant Management and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Protestant denomination, where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### 5 Oversubscription

Dundalk Grammar School’s new Admissions policy (September 2020) allows for applicants that were placed on a waiting list prior to February 1st, 2020 to receive priority of a place, up to 2025, according to the selection criteria used in the previous admission process when the application form was submitted. This used the following criteria:

1. Members of Protestant denominations and those eligible to apply for an SEC (Secondary Education Committee) grant
2. Siblings of current and past students
3. Dundalk Grammar School Junior School
4. Boarding applications
5. Date of receipt of completed application form

Further/subsequent applicants in the October application window will be added to this list and if places arise will be selected using the new admissions policy criteria outlined below.

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.

#### Priority allocation process in Dundalk Grammar School:

Those who apply during the October application window.

Order of criteria to be applied in priority allocation process:

1. Members of Protestant denominations (verified by reference) and those eligible to apply for an SEC (Secondary Education Committee) grant
2. Siblings of a student attending or having attended the school
3. Boarding applications
4. Dundalk Grammar School Junior School (having been enrolled for a minimum of 3 years)
5. Children of staff
6. Children/grandchildren of past pupils
7. Random selection

Families may only apply during the October application window. Please see the Annual Admission Notice which will be posted on [www.dgs.ie](http://www.dgs.ie).

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

The names of the tied applications will be placed on a list and randomly selected to fill the remaining places.

## 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) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (how so ever described) to the school;  
*(other than in relation to the set fees charged by 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;  
*(other than in the case of admission to the residential element of a boarding school)*
- (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;  
*(other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.*  
*In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).*
- (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).

## 7 Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Dundalk Grammar 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, if requested. In such communication 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 16](#) below for further details).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Dundalk Grammar School, the parents/guardians 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 are 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. Failure to do so will invalidate the application.

## **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 Dundalk Grammar School where;

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application form and submitted supporting documentation 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 Headmaster in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing their acceptance of the schools Code of Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy;
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 9](#) above;
- (v) the accounts of siblings are not in good standing;
- (vi) the accounts of Junior School transfers are not in good standing.

## **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.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another Board of Governors/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).

## **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 Dundalk Grammar 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 Dundalk Grammar 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.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Applicant students will be offered a place if a place is available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant student will be added to the waiting list in accordance with Section 13 of this policy.

Late applications resulting from parents moving newly to the area will be considered sympathetically. (eg job transfers from elsewhere eg industry, An Garda Siochana, Army etc.)

### 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:

Any request to transfer a student from another 2<sup>nd</sup> level school into Dundalk Grammar School must be made on a standard Application Form available from the school. Please email admissions@dgs.ie to request an application form.

Apart from exceptional cases, transfers will only be considered for the commencement of the academic year.

These transfer requests will only be considered in the course of the school year should a vacancy arise. The Headmaster will decide whether or not a transfer will be granted should a vacancy exist.

- 1) The decision of the Headmaster on such an application will be based on the school's class size.
  - Maximum enrolment in each year group is determined by the Board of Governors before the commencement of the year
- 2) Confirmation of a place is conditional on the receipt by the school of the signed acceptance by a parent of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. It is at this stage that parents are requested to provide full information regarding any medical condition and/or special educational needs of a student to whom a place has been offered. Additional information e.g. copies of school reports, may also be requested from parents by the Headmaster.

It is not normal policy to accept any students into 6<sup>th</sup> Yr.

Students must complete Transition Year or have completed Transition Year in another school to be considered for 5<sup>th</sup> Yr.

The Headmaster has a duty of care to ensure, as far as is practicable, the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Governors 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 it 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. A previous record of poor/challenging behaviour in another school is considered a risk.

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Governors of Dundalk Grammar School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (how so ever 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;

However, on the acceptance of a place in Dundalk Grammar School all successful applicants whether boarding or day will be charged an enrolment fee of €500 (€200 of which will be set against the first terms fees) and payable within 30 days from acceptance of the place. Should the deposit not be received, the place will automatically be released to another student unless a written agreement is made with the Headmaster.

## 16 Reviews/appeals

### **Review of decisions by the Board of Governors**

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 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 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 Governors prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Governors).

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 Governors prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Governors).

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.