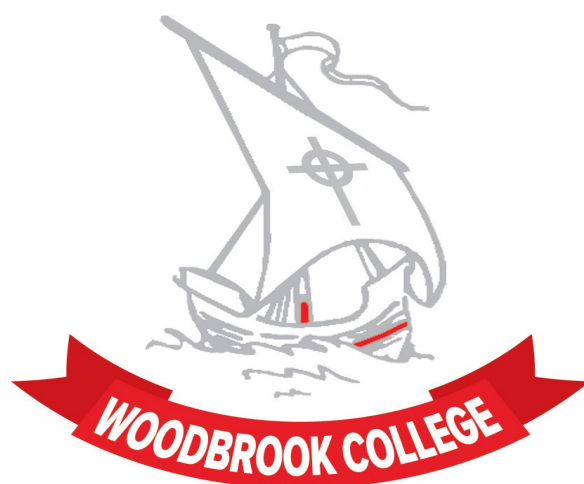


# **Woodbrook College Bray, Co. Wicklow**



## **Admissions Policy 2024 and subsequent years**

Approved by the Board of Management at a meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## 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/guardians of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023. It is published on the school's website [www.woodbrookcollege.ie](http://www.woodbrookcollege.ie) and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for the Woodbrook College 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

Woodbrook College is a co-educational Catholic voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST).

'Catholic Ethos' in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

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

The school provides religious education in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Woodbrook College 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 ethos of the school is informed by five guiding principles of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter:

- **Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values:** At Woodbrook College we maintain Religious Education as a core subject, which is a clear sign that we value the rich learning experiences that it provides for each student who engages with the programmes at junior and senior cycle. At Woodbrook College students from all faiths/traditions are continuously invited to share their experiences with peers/teachers in a holistic manner that allows each student to illuminate the experiences of other students. At Woodbrook College each student also has the opportunity to visit sacred places and places of worship from a

wide variety of faith perspectives and to attend collective worship gatherings such as the Graduation Service, Memorial Events and School Retreats.

- **Promoting partnership:** At Woodbrook College we have an active student and parent council. At Woodbrook College we engage with the local community through our Green School Committee and our Transition Year social enterprise projects.
- **Excelling in teaching and learning:** At Woodbrook College we operate an academic tracking and monitoring system to promote and encourage the academic achievement of all students. At Woodbrook College we actively engage with the process of school self-evaluation in areas of literacy, numeracy, assessment for learning and teacher collaboration.
- **Creating a caring school community:** At Woodbrook College we have a Pastoral Care team and many other student, teacher and parent/guardian supports. At Woodbrook College we fully realise the imprint of the Blessed Edmund Rice as a person of faith and commitment and seek to develop his message and example. This can be seen through initiatives that encourage each student to support and love in the way he did, for example the Edmund Rice Fun Run: support for Fr. Peter McVerry Trust, Lakers, St. James' Church Storehouse, Funeral Funding, Greystones Cancer Research; Shoe Box Appeal: support for St. Vincent De Paul Christmas Hampers; Non-Uniform Days: support for reducing the impact of Homelessness. At Woodbrook College we spend time listening to, supporting, welcoming, understanding and caring for the marginalised and challenged and this can be seen through Time-Out, Restorative Practice, Tutor, Early Intervention, Positive Role-Modelling and our Relationship and Behaviour Policy which encourages each student to realise their value and potential.
- **Inspiring transformational leadership:** At Woodbrook College we facilitate staff who wish to participate in the ERST Leadership Programme. At Woodbrook College we actively encourage and practise staff distributed leadership.
- **R.I.C.H Culture:** Respect, Inclusion, Community and Honestly is at the heart of all we do. As a school we model this behaviour and believe this approach is essential to ensuring we provide equality for all of our students and school community.

### 3. Admission Statement

Woodbrook College 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', '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. Woodbrook College 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 the Catholic faith in preference to others.

Woodbrook College 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.

Woodbrook College will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

Woodbrook College is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

Woodbrook College, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with ASD requirements. Currently Woodbrook College provides twelve (12) specific places for students approved for ASD support.

##### **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/guardian of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

Woodbrook College is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special classes attached to Woodbrook College provides an education exclusively for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class. See appendix at the end of this document for more information.

#### **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. Sons and daughters of fulltime staff with over three years' service.
2. Brothers or sisters of students currently enrolled in the school

3. Brothers or sisters of past pupils of the school
4. Sons/daughters of past pupils of the school up to a maximum of 25% of the total number of places available as specified in the annual admission notice.
5. Applicants from students currently enrolled from the following primary schools:  
Gaelscoil Ui Ceadagh, Bray.  
Rathmichael National School.  
Scoil Mhuire, Shankill.  
St. Anne's, Shankill.  
St. Cronan's Primary School, Bray.  
St. Kieran's National School, Bray  
St. Patrick's Primary School, Bray.  
St. Peter's National School, Bray.  
St. Philomena's National School, Bray.
6. Applicants from students currently enrolled from the following primary schools:  
Kilmac Primary School  
Scoil Chulann, Bray  
St. Gerard's and St. Mary's Primary School, Enniskerry,  
St Fergal's National School  
Bray School Project  
Scoil Cholmcille Senior N.S.
7. All other Applicants

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:

A lottery will be held to allocate the available places and notice of the lottery result will be communicated to all applicants in those categories listed above where a valid application has been received. This lottery will be overseen by a registered Peace Commissioner or independent observer.

Please note: Where two or more siblings apply for admission to 1st Year the applications will be deemed to be one application in the event that the applications are included in a random selection process during the admissions process. The purpose of this provision is to ensure that the applications are considered together during the admissions process. The effect will be that if one sibling secures a place the other sibling(s) will secure a place too.

## **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 (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/guardians;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents/guardians, 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; other than (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and (2) parents/guardians of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents/guardians and having attended, a school may only apply this criterion to a maximum of 25% of the available 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 31st January 2025 only).

## **7. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Woodbrook College 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.

## **8. Notifying applicants of decisions**

Applicants will be informed in writing, through a hard copy or electronically, 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 or through electronic means, 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).

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Woodbrook College, 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 Woodbrook College 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/guardian 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 Relationship and Behaviour Policy 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.

## **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 Woodbrook College 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 Woodbrook College 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:

Woodbrook College will accept applications from students who wish to transfer from another school. Such applications should be made on the special transfer application form and in addition the following information must be provided in writing before the application can be considered:

- Full details of the applicant's secondary education to date including all schools attended and relevant dates.
- A copy of the three most recent secondary school reports on headed school notepaper and signed by an authorised signatory e.g. Principal/ Year Head etc.
- A character reference from the school Principal or Year Head or equivalent of the most recent secondary school attended by the applicant.
- A copy of the student's disciplinary record for the previous twelve months.
- A copy of the applicant's Junior Certificate/Cycle results, where applicable.
- Full details of any special educational needs of the applicant.
- Copies of any psychological reports, assessments or other relevant documents relating to the applicant must be enclosed.
- Full details of any additional resource or special education needs hours allocated to the applicant in their previous schools.
- The reasons for the decision to change school.

**Criteria for Admission:** Students wishing to transfer to Woodbrook College are subject to the same eligibility criteria as new first year students as outlined under section 6 of this policy. In addition, applications for transfer into Woodbrook College will be subject to the following criteria:

- The availability of a place in a particular year group with reference to Department of Education and Skills guidelines on class sizes and the maximum number of students allowable in each year as determined by the Board of Management.
- Whether the subject requirements of the applicant can be accommodated by the current school curriculum.
- The applicant's prior history of study in the subjects they wish to pursue.
- The best interest of the applicant.
- The best interests of the school.
- Any special educational needs of the student and the school's ability to satisfy these needs.

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:

The school does not normally accept applications for enrolment after September 30th except in exceptional circumstances. Such applications however are subject to the same criteria as apply to students wishing to transfer prior to the start of the school year.

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

The Board of Woodbrook College 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.



## 17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for parents/guardians of students and students (over 18) who have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school:

These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students.

Parents/guardians of students and students (over 18) who wish to opt out of RE class should make a written request to the Principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent/guardians or the student, as the case may be, to discuss their options. Throughout this process the constitutional right of the parent/guardian/ student (over 18 years) will be respected by the school.

The 1998 Education Act states that schools are required to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students (Section 9 (d)). At Woodbrook College the allocated time on the timetable for Religious Education responds to this. Students who opt out of RE class are required to use this time to study material relating to their own religious tradition or belief, for example sacred texts. Students of no religious faith, who opt out of RE class, are required to study relevant literature or philosophical texts. A list of suggested texts can be provided by the school. In line with the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter, Woodbrook College places great importance on the religious or spiritual formation of all its students. Each student has his/her own personal journey which will be encouraged and respected. Students who opt out of RE class will not be offered extra tuition or study periods.

## 18. Reviews/appeals

### Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent/guardian of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the Board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998 and must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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. This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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. This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

## **Right of appeal**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent/guardian 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) This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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) This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

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.

## **Appendix – Admissions Procedure for Students to the ASD class**

### **Application Criteria**

Each child in the class must have a definite diagnosis of autism from a qualified Psychologist and who recommend that a place in an ASD class is the only course of action for the student to access education in a mainstream school.

The class will only cater for children who are 12 years of age or more and less than 18 years of age on the 1st September of the school year in question, unless there is a specific approval from the Department of Education and Skills for a particular student who is outside this upper age limit.

Under the regulations of the Department of Education and Skills the number of places in the ASD classes is limited to six students in each ASD class.

### **Enrolment Procedure;**

Enrolment Application Forms for the ASD Class will be available as specified in the annual admission notice for the year concerned and the notice will also specify the closing date for enrolment, date by which a decision will be communicated regarding the application and period within which an offer of a place must be accepted. However, the total number of places offered, including those in our ASD units, cannot exceed the total places

on offer for a given year. Please see admissions notice that accompanies the Admissions policy every year and is available on our website.

The process of enrolment begins with:

- A completed application form
- For higher years, a referral from an external agency or a telephone call or visit in person from the parents.
- A school application form, showing family details and medical history is then completed.
- Fully completed applications are then recorded in the applications file.
- Entry into this file secures a place on the list of applications.

The Enrolment Application must be accompanied by all of the following supporting documentation supplied by parents:

- The child must have a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-IV/V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or team.
- Original birth certificate.
- A written psychological assessment /report (ideally dated within the six months prior to the Application being submitted) or a written report from a multi-disciplinary team must be provided. A multi-disciplinary team may consist of a Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and a Physiotherapist.
- There must be a recommendation by the relevant professionals in the report that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the child.

#### Oversubscription

If the number of the children on the list of applicants exceeds the number of places available as specified in the annual admission notice for the school year concerned, the following criteria will apply:

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. Sons and daughters of fulltime staff with over three years' service.
2. Brothers or sisters of students currently enrolled in the school
3. Brothers or sisters of past pupils of the school
4. Sons/daughters of past pupils of the school up to a maximum of 25% of the total number of places available as specified in the annual admission notice.
5. Applicants from students currently enrolled from the following primary schools:

Gaelscoil Ui Ceadagh, Bray.

Rathmichael National School.

Scoil Mhuire, Shankill.

St. Anne's, Shankill.

St. Cronan's Primary School, Bray.

St. Kieran's National School, Bray

St. Patrick's Primary School, Bray.

St. Peter's National School, Bray.

St. Philomena's National School, Bray.

6. Applicants from students currently enrolled from the following primary schools:

Kilmac Primary School

Scoil Chulann, Bray

St. Gerard's and St. Mary's Primary School, Enniskerry,

St Fergal's National School  
Bray School Project  
Scoil Cholmcille Senior N.S.

7. All other Applicants

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:

A lottery will be held to allocate the available places and notice of the lottery result will be communicated to all applicants in those categories listed above where a valid application has been received. This lottery will be overseen by a registered Peace Commissioner or independent observer.