

# ST. PAUL'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## Admission Policy

### **The Purpose of this Document**

This document states the policy of St. Paul's Community College concerning admission to the school and takes due cognizance of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and Equal Status Act 2000

We recognise and respect each student as an individual, embracing a variety of learning and teaching styles and aspiring to encourage each student's unique skills and talents.

St. Paul's Community College encourages the involvement of parents through home and school contact and through the involvement in the development and growth of the parent's council

St. Paul's Community College is a multi-denominational co-educational school. The school exists to provide a centre of learning which is challenging, equitable and broad-based. The school promotes, through its various activities, an atmosphere where there is a genuine awareness of human dignity and which allows its students to develop as people and to become confident and productive members of society. The school encourages each student to achieve to his or her ability to attain the various skills and attributes that will ultimately allow them to become successful members of society.

### Operating Context

The financial and teaching resources of St. Paul's Community College are provided by the Department of Education and Science (DES) grants and disbursed by the Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board (ETB). These grants are supplemented by other local contributions, thus the implementation of the school's Admission Policy must have due regard to resources and funding available. St. Paul's Community College follows the circular programmes described by the (DES) which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998. The Board of Management of St. Paul's Community College, within the context and parameters of DES regulations and programmes and having due regard to the rights of the Waterford & Wexford ETB and resources supports the underlying principles of:

Inclusiveness

Equality of access

Gender equity

Parental rights in relation to enrolments

Respect of diversity of traditions, values, beliefs,

Languages and ways of life in society.

### School Details

The details of management, organisation, teaching resources and curriculum are outlined in the School Prospectus (enclosed)

### Procedures for School Entry

1. All local primary schools are visited. Students are given information about St. Paul's Community College and a School Prospectus to bring home with them.
2. Parents and students are invited to an Open Night where teachers and students are available to talk about subjects etc. This meeting takes place before the end of the first school term.
3. Application Forms are available to parents or guardians on Open Night and the closing date for receipt of applications is clearly outlined on the form. A recent passport size photograph of the applicant must be submitted with his or her Application Form.
4. Applications that are received after this closing date will be placed on a waiting list and will be offered a place should one become available.
5. An original Birth Certificate (which will be returned) is to be submitted with the Application Form.
6. A letter to the applicants' parents or guardians acknowledges the receipt of Application Forms. It is the policy of St. Paul's Community College to communicate regularly with all applicants.
7. All applicant students will sit an entrance assessment. This assessment is normally held at the end of February.
8. There are consultations with the primary schools following the entrance assessment.
9. A letter is sent to parents or guardians outlining the programme that we hope to offer to each applicant and inviting the parents or guardians to meet senior staff to finalise these options. The letter will also contain copies of school's policies in relation to Admissions, Behaviour etc.
10. The applicant's latest school report is to be brought to this meeting with the senior staff.
11. Final details of subjects, classes and book lists will be posted to each applicant in June.

### The Decision Making Process

Except in very exceptional applicants will be enrolled on application. Applications that do not conform to procedures for school entry outlined above will be referred to the Board of Management (BOM) acting on behalf of Waterford & Wexford ETB in accordance with the School's Admission Policy and will be communicated to the parents or guardians within 21 calendar days of receiving information as prescribed by the Minister under the Act. The decision to refuse an application can only be made by the BOM in consultation with Waterford and Wexford ETB.

- DES rules in relation to the age of applicants will be applied-students must be aged at least 12 years on the First of January in the calendar year following the applicant's entry to first year.
- Priority will then be given in the following order to those students that:
  1. Have (or have had) siblings enrolled in the school
  2. Are from traditional feeder schools to St. Paul's Community College

### Special Educational Needs

St. Paul's Community College welcomes students with special needs and will use the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Skills to make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs so that these students are free to participate in the life of the school is so far as is reasonably practicable.

Parents are requested to outline the details of a child's special needs on the Application Form. The Principal should be made aware of special needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed.

It is important that the degree of the needs would be such that the student's enrolment would be consistent with the best interest of the student concerned and the effective provision of education for other students.

While recognising and fully supporting parents' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the College's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply of resources, suitable to be needs of the individual student, being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills.

In the case of application with special needs St. Paul's Community College will:

- Take steps at an early stage to identify those application with special educational needs and to become familiar with their needs.
- Request a copy of the applicant's medical and psychological report and their Individual Educational Report (IEP), if available.
- Request an immediate assessment in order to assist the school in establishing the special need and to profile the support service required.
- Request from the DES that the appropriate additional resources e.g. SNA, specialised equipment of furniture, transport etc be provided.

The Principal may request a meeting with the parents of the student to discuss the student's educational or other needs.

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Contact will be made with the National Council for Special Educational Needs regarding resources to which the students may be entitled.

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days, after a parent/guardian has provided all the relevant information, the Board of Management will make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/guardians in writing thereof (Education Welfare Act Section 19(3)).

While the Board of Management will do all it can to identify, plan for and provide for the needs of those applicants with disabilities or special educational needs, it's the policy of St. Paul's Community College to accommodate only those students whose special needs can be met within the resources provided to it by the DES.

#### Transfers from other Second Level Schools

Students who apply to transfer to St. Paul's Community College are subject to the Schools Admission Policy and to:

- The school being satisfied with the reasons for the transfer. Information will be requested from the applicant's former (or present) school concerning attendance, behaviour, educational progress, disabilities and special needs etc.
- The school regarding the move to be in best interest of the applicant.
- Available space.
- Consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer, if appropriate.
- Application must be made on a St. Paul's Community College application form, which can be obtained from the college on request. The application form should be returned with a recent written reference from the previous school. Parents/Guardian who request a place for their son/daughter will be asked to attend for interview with him/her before the Principal makes a decision on the application. Places are not guaranteed.

With the best interests of the student in mind and having due cognizance of his or her educational welfare and considering the issues relating to mid-year transfers which may include subject choices, class size and available resources, the Waterford and Wexford ETB, through the Board of Management of St. Paul's Community College may decide to refuse admission at that time and advise the parents or guardians to reapply if they wish at the start of the following year.

The Board will decide whether or not a transfer:

- Is in agreement with school's Admission Policy
- Is in the best interest of the student
- Is in the best interest of the college
- Is of educational benefit to the student

Waterford and Wexford ETB, through the Board of Management of St. Paul's Community College, reserves the right to refuse an application for admission in exceptional circumstances.

Parents or guardians have the right to appeal a refusal to enrol an applicant under Section 29 of the Education Act. It is the policy of St. Paul's Community College to inform parents or guardians of this right when refusing an application.

## Repeat of Leaving Certificate

Students may repeat Leaving Year 2 subject to the following conditions being fulfilled:

1. The Department of Education and Skills regulations must be fulfilled and a suitable vacancy must exist in the school.
2. Applications must accept that not all current subject combinations may suit repeat students: that they may not be able to take all subjects of their choice if the timetable or class numbers do not permit.
3. They must attend all classes and activities scheduled for them
4. The student's record in the school (conduct, work ethic and attendance) must be satisfactory.
5. Repeat student who may not be timetabled for some subjects will be required to be in a supervised situation during all class periods.
6. Repeat students will have settled all outstanding accounts with the school

## Admission Policy to ASD Centre

### 1. Procedures for Admission

The student must apply for admission to the school in the usual manner as outlined in the school admission policy. The student will be subject to the terms and conditions of the school Admissions Policy.

Diagnosis must be determined by the DSM-IV, ICD 10 (or updated versions of same) or other recognised diagnostic tools acceptable to the admissions panel.

The following documents will also be required from applicants seeking a place in the centre. All of those should be less than two years old.

- A cognitive assessment which included an estimate of global cognitive function.
- A current psychological report recommends that the student should have access to an A.S.D. class.
- A primary school report including a transition form and NEPS report.

Evidence available must suggest that the applicant must have the adaptive skills and cognitive functioning that would enable them to learn consistently in a supported mainstream environment.

The applicant would have accessed mainstream education to a level consistent with the expected of students within the ASD centre.

### 2. Admissions Panel

All applicants to the centre will be reviewed by the admission panel which may consist of the following members:

School Principal/Deputy Principal

ASD Teacher

## Year Head

The function of the admissions panel will be as follows:

- To review all applications and all documents relevant to a student applying for a place in the centre.
- To verify the centre's suitability in meeting the needs of the applicant.
- To make recommendations based on these findings to the Board of Management of St. Paul's Community College.

### 4. Extent of the Accommodations

The maximum student number enrolled in the ASD centre will not exceed the recommendations of the Department of Education and Skills, in any given year. Waiting lists will not be maintained by the school in the event of more applicants than places an **independently witnessed lottery will be held in line with our enrolment criteria.**

### 5. Review Process

All placements are subject to review at the request of the parents. This review will be carried out by the school staff with parent and student involvement, if appropriate.

The outcome of any review will be examined by the Admission Panel and the Board of Management. If, in the event that a placement is inappropriate (under resourced), the school will liaise with the relevant agencies in an effort to obtain a more suitable placement for the student.