



Admissions and Participation Policy

for

Seamount College

A . Introduction

The board of management is publishing this as the official Admission and Participation Policy for the school. The patron of the school Bishop Martin Drennan has approved this publication.

Copies of the policy are available at all times at the school and are furnished to each person who applies to be admitted to the school.

This Admissions Policy is one of the most important documents the school has produced. It is written for parents and students who wish to find out about the school and how to apply for admission to the school. Other important information about the school can be found in the School Prospectus.

School Ethos: Patron's statement

“As Patron of Seamount College I ask the Lord's blessing on all who are involved in the life of the school: The Board of Management, Parents, Principal, Teaching Staff, Students and Ancillary Staff. Each one of us is made in the image of God, created in love and given the potential to grow so that we become more and more like Jesus. To be Catholic is to see as Jesus sees, to share his attitudes and his values, to know the peace and joy he gives.

May the Holy Spirit, the source of all wisdom, be your guide and your strength so that your time in Seamount may enable you to become the best you can be.”

Bishop Martin Drennan

School Mission Statement

Our aim is to provide with the support of parents, a holistic, Christian education in a caring and respectful environment where teaching and learning lead to the development of the full potential of each individual in the school community.

We believe that character formation is fundamental in preparing young people for life.

It is our hope that students will leave us adequately prepared for life, with a healthy self-image and the ability to adapt in a rapidly changing world.

Faith Development

The faith development of our students is given priority through an extensive and creative religious education programme. All students are expected to attend religious education classes which are designed to be inclusive and participatory in nature.

Current legislation

The Office of the Diocese of Galway and Seamount College fully subscribe to and operate within current legislation* and try to ensure that best practice prevails in all aspects of the work of the school.

The basic principles of current education legislation are in tune with the College's mission statement i.e. partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion, diversity, parental choice, equality of participation and access.

In its structures and policies, the College will ensure that these principles are respected and implemented.

*

- *Education Act 1998*
- *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*
- *Equal Status Act 2000*
- *Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2002*

For more information and background about Seamount College please refer to “Appendix I”.

B. Participation Policy

In this section we outline our policy for facilitating the participation of Parents and Students.

Parents' Council

The College has a very long tradition of partnership with parents and has a very active Parents' Council. It has a Constitution, Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer and is affiliated to the "National Congress of Catholic Schools Parents Associations". Some of the areas in which the Parents Council are involved are: School Policies, Integration of 1st Year Parents, Fundraising, etc.

Students' Council

It is the aim of the school to enable students to participate as fully as possible in all school programmes, both curricular and extra-curricular, and, to enable this to happen, that the board has put in place procedures to keep students informed of all school activities and opportunities. These procedures are also aimed at facilitating the involvement of students in the operation of the school, having regard to their age and experience.

The Students' Council is made up of students' representatives from each year group. It has a Constitution, a Chairperson, Secretary and a Teacher representative. It is actively involved with student issues in the College, as well as organising Sports Days, Music Competitions, the Green Schools initiative and Charity fund raising events.

C. Admissions Policy

Introduction

Seamount College welcomes all eligible students who apply, including those with special educational needs.

Seamount College is aware, in regard to admissions, of the principles and requirements of a democratic society and will both respect and promote respect for social diversity with regard to values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life.

In particular the board is aware of its obligations under relevant equality legislation.

The school is also required by law to have regard for the efficient use of resources, and will have regard to all these considerations in managing the admission of students and afterwards in operating the school.

The school is fully aware of its obligations to provide for maximum accessibility of students to the school and to promote the right of parents to send their child to the school of their choice.

While bearing all these in mind, Seamount College also has a legal duty to the patron to uphold the characteristic spirit of a school, which is stated elsewhere in this document.

General Requirements for all students applying

Eligibility

To be eligible for admission to the school a student must have reached 12 years of age on the 1st January in the calendar year following the student's entry into the school.

It will be expected that the student will have completed sixth class in Primary school or equivalent in another jurisdiction.

Requirements

As part of the Admissions Process, parents will be expected to

- ✓ Complete an Application Form and submit it before the closing date
- ✓ Ensure that all the required information is submitted to the College
- ✓ Accept in writing the College ethos as outlined in this document
- ✓ Accept in writing the College Code of Behaviour and undertake to make “all reasonable” efforts to ensure their son / daughter’s co-operation with the Code.

Assessment Test

An assessment test to ascertain learning needs will be conducted at the beginning of the academic year for all those enrolled in the school. All students must participate in this test which will provide information to enable the school areas requiring extra tuition.

Entry into First Year

Application Form

An Application Form must be completed for each student seeking enrolment in the College. All the relevant information must accompany the Application.

Closing Date

The closing date for Applications is contained in the Application Form. **The submission of an Application does not imply that the student has been admitted to the College.**

Enrolment

The College will reply within 21 days *after the closing date* indicating whether the student has been accepted for enrolment, and offering a place in the College.

Registration

Registration will consist of :

- ✓ Signing the Registration Form indicating
 - Acceptance of the offer of a place in the school.
 - Acceptance of the School Code of Behaviour
 - Acceptance of the Ethos of the College as outlined in the College’s Admissions Policy.
 - An invitation to attend an Induction Day for new 1st Years.

Late Applications

Late Applications for First Year will be accepted subject to the following:

- ✓ Applicants will be placed on a waiting list if the earlier enrolment process was over-subscribed
- ✓ Availability of a place in the school
- ✓ Application Form and all relevant information being submitted
- ✓ The criteria for admission will be applied by the Admissions Committee.
- ✓ ***The final decision regarding admission to Seamount College lies with the Board of Management.***
- ✓ ***The College will, as far as is practicable, reply within 21 days, indicating whether*** the student has been accepted for enrolment, and offering a place in the College.

Criteria for admission

The Board of Management will determine the number of places it can offer to First Year students.

When the Admissions Committee meet to review the Applications, and there are more applications for places than places available, priority will be given to :

1. Students from the feeder schools (c.f. "Appendx I")
2. Brothers and sisters of present pupils
3. Brothers/sons / sisters/daughters of Seamount College staff
4. Catholic students from other schools
5. Brothers/sons / sisters/daughters of past pupils

These criteria will be applied strictly in the order in which they are outlined.

In the event that all criteria are exhausted, the school will review applications from students from Primary schools in the official catchment area, and places will be allotted on a *random** basis.

**Names will be selected at random from a hat by a committee consisting of a nominated member of the Board of Management and a nominated member of the Parents' Council / independent person.*

Entry to a class other than First Year

Transfers from other schools

Seamount College will make every reasonable effort to facilitate students seeking a transfer to our school. The Board of Management will decide on an application for **admission to any other year other than First Year** by applying the following criteria:

1. There must be an **available place** after the general admissions criteria have been applied
2. It is in agreement with the College Admissions Policy.
3. The transfer must be in the best interest of the student.
4. The transfer must be in the best interest of the College and the other students in the College.
5. The transfer must be of educational benefit to the student. (e.g. it may not be possible to offer the student certain subject combinations, a place in a certain programme etc.)
6. The College Application Form must be completed
7. All relevant information from the applicants' former school(s) must be made available, including:
 - a. Copies of the two most recent school reports for the student
 - b. Copies of results of any State Examinations taken by the student

In arriving at its decision the Board will consult with the student's parents/guardians, his or her former school(s) and the educational welfare officer.

The student will be interviewed (usually in the presence of his / her parent) by the Principal using the criteria outlined above.

The Board of Management will examine the Principal's recommendation and decide on the application.

As soon as is practicable, but not later than 21 days, after a parent/guardian has provided the relevant information, the Board of Management shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/guardians in writing thereof. (Education Welfare Act 2000 (Section 19 (3)).

Right to refuse admission

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse to enrol a student who has applied for admission to the College. In the event of refusal, the parent has a right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998)

D . Policy on Suspensions and Expulsions

The board is required by law to maintain reasonable order and safety throughout the College and on all school activities, and discharges this duty through its employees, mainly the Principal and teachers. In addition, good order is necessary to enable teaching and learning to take place. The maintenance of safety and good order requires the drafting and implementation of a code of behaviour.

The two most serious sanctions available to the College are suspension and expulsion. Expulsion is seen as a last resort, and will normally only be resorted to when other sanctions have been exhausted and the student and parents/guardians have been made aware, by notice in writing, that expulsion is being contemplated by the board and invited to make their views known to the School. In every case it will be preceded by a suspension from school activities to enable this exchange of views to take place.

Suspensions will be availed of either after all of the minor sanctions have been exhausted, or as a response to a single breach of school discipline so outrageous that any lesser sanction would be inappropriate in the circumstances. Suspension may be from attendance at school and all school activities, or may be more limited in its scope and effect. The Principal is empowered to impose a suspension, and is required to inform the board whenever this is done. The board alone has the power to expel.

There is a system of appeals against expulsions and long suspensions in place pursuant to the Education Act 1998. The procedures for managing suspensions and expulsions, and all details of appeals in these situations, are set out in the code of behaviour of the school.

E. Participation Policy for Students with Special Needs

The College welcomes applications from students with special educational needs unless the nature and degree of those needs is such that to enrol the student concerned would be inconsistent with both the best interests of the student concerned (boards of management are obliged to provide an appropriate education for all students – see Education Act 1998 – section 15.1) and the effective provision of education for the other students with whom the student concerned is to be educated.

F. Admissions Policy for Students with Special Needs

Seamount College welcomes students with special needs and will use the resources, both financial and personnel, provided by the Department of Education and Science to make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs up to nominal cost so that these students are free to participate in the life in the school in so far as is reasonably practicable.

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 the needs of the individual student, being supplied by the Department of Education and Science.

The Board of Management must be made aware of any special needs as early as possible, so that these needs can be assessed and addressed where possible.

Any details of special needs must be detailed on the Application Form.

The Board of Management, having gathered all relevant information and professional documentation, assesses how the needs of these students can be met.

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

The Principal may request a meeting with the parents of the student to discuss the application and the student's needs.

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

N.B. It may take some time for the Department of Education and Science to process such applications. Parents are strongly advised to inform the college as early as possible and discuss their particular situation well in advance of making application.

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 shall make a decision in respect of the application concerned and inform the parents/guardians in writing thereof. Education Welfare Act (Section 19 (3)).

Appendix I. About Seamount College

<i>Our History</i>	<p>Seamount College opened as a secondary boarding and day school with an enrolment of 12 pupils on the Feast of our Lady of Mercy, September 24th 1922, in Seamount House (the present convent) which had served as a residence for Dr. Hynes from 1847. His successor Dr. Nally married Elizabeth Hynes who eventually made a gift of Seamount House and grounds to the Sisters of Mercy. The high standards set by the first Principal Sr. Ignatius O'Connell quickly earned for Seamount College a nationwide reputation for excellence which has continued since. The last boarders left in 1996 and Seamount became a day school only. Since 2010, Seamount College has enrolled boys as well as girls.</p>
<i>At Present</i>	<p>Seamount College Kinvara continues to provide a Catholic education, with a wide range of subjects and programmes. The College has a very experienced teaching staff and a wide range of extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>As a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School, Seamount College is administered by a Board of Management and, from September 2010, will be under the patronage of the Office of the Diocese of Galway.</p> <p>In 2010 it has undergone a change of status to become a co-ed school serving the needs of South Galway and North Clare.</p>
<i>Location and facilities</i>	<p>Seamount College is located in the centre of Kinvara on a 5½ acre educational campus overlooking Galway Bay. The school was founded in 1922 in Seamount House and has grown extensively to what is now a very fine building with educational, sporting and technical facilities.</p> <p>Surrounding the buildings are basketball courts and playing fields. Also, the school uses the local community centre, the local astro turf area and the GAA hurling pitch.</p> <p>The College's facilities are open to the local community for a variety of uses.</p>
<i>Management Structure</i>	<p>The College is administered by the Board of Management, representing the trustees, staff and parents.</p> <p>Chairperson of the Board : <u>Helen Kelly</u> Secretary to Board and School Principal : <u>Maighréad Mhic Dhomhnaill</u> Deputy Principal : <u>Geraldine Connors</u></p>
<i>School Organisation</i>	<p>Our school is organised around 6 year groups. Each group has a Year Head. Every class in the year has a Class Teacher who takes a special interest in each of the pupils and meets them regularly. Progress is monitored and contact made with parents when deemed necessary.</p> <p>Classes are organised on a mixed-ability basis, with banding arrangements in Maths, English and Irish.</p>
<i>Teachers</i>	<p>The teaching staff is highly qualified and experienced. Staff are employed by the Board of Management and paid by the Department of Education and Science.</p>

Curriculum	A full range of subjects and programmes is provided, including Junior Certificate, Transition Year, Leaving Certificate, and, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.
Opening Hours	The school day runs from 9am until 4pm, Monday to Friday. Lunch break is from 12.30 – 1.30pm daily.
School calendar	Each year parents receive a school calendar detailing school holidays, parent-teacher meetings and other important events
Voluntary Subscription	There is a significant gap between State funding to schools and the real cost of educating your son or daughter. The College prides itself on maintaining very high standards in all areas of the educational service offered. This requires the College to rely on Voluntary Subscriptions to make up this shortfall.
Sport & Extra Curricular Activities	All students are encouraged to take part in out-of-class activities. There is a full range of sports and other activities, making full use of the College's facilities.
The Process of Admissions for 1st Years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Principal contacts each Primary School in the area and talks to the 6th classes and teachers each year. 2. 6th class students from each Primary school and their parents are invited to an Information Evening for students at the College where they can see at first hand the College in operation, and experience some of the facilities available. 3. Application Forms will continue to be available directly from the College up to the closing date for applications 4. Registration can take place at the Information Evening and up to the closing date.
Feeder Schools	Kinvara, Doorus, Northampton, Ballindereen, New Quay, Kiltiernan, Labane, Ballyvaughan
Data Protection	<p>Each parent is asked to sign a simple declaration which authorises Seamount College to use information provided on the application form for all bona fide school purposes.</p> <p>The School undertakes that personal information on students will not be disclosed to anyone other than relevant school staff or staff of the Department of Education and Science or its agencies without first consulting the parents.</p>