

# **Galway Community College**

## **Admission Policy**

**Adopted Copy February 2011**

**This policy has been prepared in consultation with  
Parents, Students, Staff, the Board of Management  
and the City of Galway VEC.**

**Ratified By B.O.M. 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2011**

**Ratified By Galway City VEC 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2011**

## **Scope, Rational and Legal Framework**

The scope of this policy is to provide fair, transparent and effective criteria for the admission of students to Galway Community College in compliance with the legislative requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004.

The policy is based on the principles of:

- Parental and Student choice
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society.

## **Link to Mission Statement**

Galway Community College is a school under the trusteeship of City of Galway VEC. We are an inclusive school both in our intake and in the curriculum which we provide. We aim to provide the highest standard of education for all our students.

We endeavour to fulfil our mission in partnership with parents/guardians, staff, students, trustees and the local community.

## **Mission Statement**

We aim to create a caring atmosphere where students are encouraged and helped to develop their unique gifts and talents. We provide the academic and vocational skills that enable students to attain their maximum potential and participate fully as good citizens in society. Working in partnership with parents and community, we strive, to ensure the intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional and social needs of each individual is developed.

This Statement is based on core values:

- Our school is a welcoming, secure and challenging learning environment.
- Education is a partnership between school, parents/guardians and students.
- Our purpose is to develop each pupil's confidence, potential and moral values.

- The importance and value of all members of the school community should be at the heart of all decisions and actions.
- Every child in our care is entitled to learn in an environment, which is happy, caring and stimulating, where each individual can learn without fear of bullying or physical abuse, and where consideration, courtesy and respect is shown to all people at all times, in the context of a caring ethos.

### **Procedures for Admission into First Year**

Application forms are available from the school office on request. Application forms will also be handed out to prospective parents of first year applicants at an open day which is held early in the year preceding the school year for which the student wishes to enrol. Details are provided through the primary schools, notices in the parish newsletters, local newspapers and radio.

The closing date for receipt of applications is the last working day in February of the applicants' 6<sup>th</sup> class in primary school.

- Enrolments to first year will be accepted from applicants who reside within the catchment area.
- Applications to first year who reside outside the catchment area will be accepted subject to the availability of places in the school.
- Where it is anticipated that the school will not be able to physically accommodate all the new entrants to first year who enrol during the enrolment period those applicants from outside the established catchment will be advised that their application is being accepted only on condition that sufficient places/accommodation will be made available. Where the number of such applicants exceeds the number of available places, the students to whom confirmed places will be offered will be decided by lottery to be conducted by the School Authorities.
- New applicants to first year who enrol after the enrolment period and prior to the commencement of the school term in August each year will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- Once the school term has commenced, all applications for enrolment will be dealt with under the policy relating to transferring students, as set out elsewhere.
- The school reserves the right to refuse a student admission if, in the opinion of the school authorities, the behaviour of that student is likely to have a detrimental effect on the provision of education to other students.

To support the vocational ethos of the school, attempts will be made to maintain the following class size.

- Oak 1: 24 students
- Beech1: 20 students
- All subsequent classes: 24 students

We endeavour to keep classes to this size to maximise educational opportunity for every student. This also accommodates health and safety guidelines, as all students will experience traditional vocational based practical subjects.

All first year students must be age appropriate, that is, between the ages of twelve and fourteen years of age. An assessment test in English, Irish and Mathematics is carried out for internal school purposes. It should be noted that academic ability is not a consideration for admission and that this assessment is used to determine if additional supports will be required for students upon the enrolment in first year. An English Language Assessment Test is offered to international students for whom English is a second language.

All application forms must include the following details:

1. Pupil's Name, Age, Date of Birth, Full Address.
2. PPS number and Mother's Maiden name as required by the Department of Education and Science.
3. Parent/Guardian's names and addresses.
4. Telephone Contact Numbers.
5. Emergency Contact Numbers.
6. Details of medical conditions, disabilities, special needs. Where an applicant has recognised special needs, parents/guardians should make application in March preceding the September intake, and supply copies of relevant reports or recommendations or assessments, to facilitate either provision of appropriate supports, or application to the Dept. of Education & Science for such supports. In some instances (e.g. where specialized equipment or alteration to the physical structure is required), it may be necessary for either the Board of Management, or the Principal acting on behalf of the board, to defer enrolment until relevant documentation is presented, or until

appropriate support arrangements are in place to meet the special educational needs of the intending student.

7. Name of Family doctor.
8. Names of other family members attending this school
9. Nationality
10. Religious affiliation, if any.
11. Previous schools attended.
12. Medical Card details if any.

(The school reserves the right to contact the current or previous schools of the applicant.)

Special Education Needs (S.E.N.) students and those with Disabilities are catered for in accordance with the Education Act 1998 (Part 1 Section 6a). The school welcomes applications from students with special education needs. However, if the nature and degree of these needs is such that to enrol the students concerned would be inconsistent with both the best education interests of the applicant and the effective provision of education for the other students, the Board of Management or the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management will refuse admission on health and safety grounds.

### **Acceptance and continued attendance in the college is based on the following:**

- Parents/Guardians must actively support our school ethos and goals.
- Parents/Guardians must accept the Code of Behaviour and make all reasonable effort to ensure the student complies with the code.
- Students must follow the full timetabled programme. Exceptions are made for students who have reduced timetables in the context of special educational needs.
- The school reserves the right to refuse a student admission if, in the opinion of the school authorities, the behaviour of that student is likely to have a detrimental effect on the provision of education to other students.
- To provide misleading or inaccurate information may result in disqualification of the applicant.

### **Transfer Programme from Primary to Second-level education.**

A transfer programme helps the new students to adapt to second-level education. Local primary schools and youth workers help to prepare sixth class students for entry to the college. A period of induction is facilitated by various teachers and students are supported as class groups and on an individual basis where necessary.

## Transfers

While it is appreciated that in certain exceptional circumstances transfers are unavoidable (e.g. a change of residence or a family moving into the area) as a matter of general policy transfers into the school are discouraged in the overall interests of the continuity of the student's education.

An application to transfer is defined as one from a student who has previously enrolled in another school in or outside the catchment area or from a student who makes application after the commencement of the autumn school term. In general it is not the policy of the Board of Management to accept transfer applications from students previously enrolled in other local post – primary schools.

Applications from students wishing to transfer into the school should be accompanied by a letter setting out clearly the reason(s) for the application and the following documentation:

- (i) Completed enrolment form
- (ii) The two most recent reports from the pupil's previous school
- (iii) A written reference / report from the previous school together with two additional written references, dated within one month of the date of application, from a local Youth Club/Sports Club or similar organisation and/or a member of the Garda Síochána or a person of standing in the community.
- (iv) A statement on special needs, if relevant.

The college also reserves the right to request a confidential reference from the authorities in previous school(s).

Having due regard to the statutory and constitutional rights of parents and their children, the Board of Management reserves the right to refuse any application in particular circumstances, which might include but is not exclusively confined to the following:

- (i) An established prior record of poor behaviour from previous schools
- (ii) Lack of adequate resources to cater for particular needs of the student
- (iii) Insufficient educational attainment to participate in a particular course

Applications to transfer into the school will be considered having regard to the overall wellbeing of existing pupils and the availability of physical space and resources. Following consideration by the School Authorities of individual applications to transfer into the school, where the authorities have good grounds for forming the fair and reasonable opinion that it would not be in the best interests of the existing students and/or the applicant to accept such a transfer, it is the policy of the school to refuse to enrol such applicants.

Applications will not be accepted from students who are the subject of ongoing disciplinary proceedings in another school which includes any ongoing statutory procedures in accordance with the Education act 1998 or the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

In general, it is the policy of the School Authorities not to accept transfers during the school year. However in the case of students whose family have moved into the catchment area and who are not enrolled in another post primary school, applications will be considered.

All transfer applicants must be interviewed by the School Authorities.

### **The Application form must be completed in full**

The college reserves the right to request other details relevant to the enrolment process. Decisions will be notified to parents within 21 days after a parent/guardian has provided all relevant data as per Section 19, Education Welfare Act, 2000.

The following factors will be considered in respect of applications:

- Class Size
- Availability of staff
- Availability of appropriate accommodation
- The rights of applicants
- The rights and welfare of existing students and staff within the school

- The educational attainment of the applicant having regard to the program which he/she wishes to enrol in
- The previous record of attendance and behaviour of the applicant

**Right of Appeal**

An applicant who is refused enrolment has a right to appeal against the decision of the School Authorities of Galway Community College to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Such an appeal should be made within 14 days of the date of written notification of the refusal. The appropriate forms and guidelines are available from the school secretary during normal school office hours. Intending appellants should contact the National Education Welfare Board who will put them in contact with their local Educational Welfare Officer who will be able to offer advice and assistance on the appeal procedure.