

Admissions and Progression Policy

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Table of Contents

1. Scope and Purpose	3
1.1 Scope.....	3
1.2 Purpose.....	3
1.3 Other Policy links.....	3
2. Definitions.....	3
3. Policy Statement	4
3.1 Context.....	4
3.2 Admissions Priorities.....	4
3.3 General Principles.....	6
3.4 Applicants with a Disclosure.....	6
3.5 Unsuccessful Applications	6
3.6 Appeals.....	7
3.7 Progression to a different level of study/year 2/RASMA	7
4. Responsibilities	7
5. Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment Statement	8
6. Communication and Storage	8

1. Scope and Purpose

1.1 Scope

This Policy applies to all applicants to St David's Catholic College, including those from partner schools, other educational institutions, home schooled and international applicants. It governs all aspects of the admissions and progression processes within the College.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that admissions and progression decisions are made fairly, transparently; and consistently, aligned with the College's mission: *'A Catholic college for the community, seeking to discover and realise the full potential of all in an atmosphere of love, service and respect inspired by Christ.'*

1.3 Other Policy links

This Policy is aligned with and supports other college policies and procedures including:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy and Procedures
- Data Protection Policy and Procedures
- Personal Data Breach Policy and Procedures
- Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedures

This Policy is informed by:

- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Welsh Language Standards

2. Definitions

Term	Explanation
Applicant	Any individual applying for admission to programme of study at the College.
Partner Schools	The six Catholic schools affiliated with St David's Catholic College.
Guidance Session	A meeting between the applicant and College staff to determine suitability for study.
Right to Study	Verification of identity and immigration status required prior to enrolment.
Catholic	For the purposes of this policy, 'Catholic' means a baptised member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome, including the Eastern Catholic Churches. Evidence may

Term	Explanation
	be requested in the form of a baptism certificate or certificate of reception. Where evidence cannot be obtained, the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate will determine membership in accordance with the norms of canon law.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Context

The College serves the Catholic and wider community of Cardiff and other areas; recruiting learners from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. It operates a fair, transparent and inclusive admissions process that aligns with Catholic social teaching and equality legislation. As a Catholic institution under the authority of the Archdiocese, the College follows diocesan guidance in matters relating to Catholic identity, ethos and the definition of Catholicity as required by canon law.

In line with Catholic education principles, St David’s Catholic College forms young people in the light of Christ and works in partnership with families and parishes to support the Church’s mission in education.

3.2 Admissions Priorities

As a designated Catholic College, St David’s welcomes applications from all young people and serves the Catholic community and the wider community. In keeping with diocesan guidance, the College’s mission and ethos ensure that Catholic applicants are appropriately supported in accessing a Catholic post-16 education; however, no applicant is excluded on the basis of faith.

Furthermore, the college considers its *preferential option for the poor* to be foundational to its mission by providing high quality education and formation to learners from communities with the greatest need. Therefore, the college will pay due regard to this in devising its admissions procedures.

3.2.1 Highest Priority for Catholics

The College is required by the Archbishop to give priority to Catholic learners when determining priorities for admitting learners for a place at the college.

Definition of ‘Catholic’ for Purposes of Admissions

For the purposes of admission criteria, the term ‘Catholic’ means a baptised person who is a member of any Catholic Church that is in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes members of the Eastern Catholic Churches which are in full communion with the See of Rome. Members of these Churches have the full rights of any member of the Catholic Church and must not be discriminated against, either directly or indirectly.

In admission arrangements, the designation 'Catholic' is to be preferred to any other, and the term 'Roman Catholic' is not to be used.

Membership of a Catholic Church is gained in one of two ways:

- a) an unbaptised person becomes a Catholic by baptism in a Catholic Church. This is recorded in the Church's Baptismal Register;
- b) other baptised Christians become Catholics by being received into a Catholic Church. This is recorded in the Church's Register of Receptions or, exceptionally, in the Church's Baptismal Register.

The College therefore accepts the following as evidence of membership of a Catholic Church:

- a) a certificate of baptism from a Catholic Church, or
- b) a certificate of reception into the Catholic Church.

Here the term 'certificate' means a certified copy of an entry in the appropriate register. Should neither of these documents obtainable the College will contact the applicant's parish priest who, after consulting with the Archbishop, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

3.2.2 Catechumens and Members of Other Eastern Christian Churches

The College provides for special status for Catechumens and members of other Eastern Christian Churches in terms of prioritising offers of place at the college should the college be oversubscribed.

Catechumens are persons who wish to be baptised and have been accepted into the Order of Catechumens by the appropriate liturgical rite; acceptance into the catechumenate is normally demonstrated by a certified copy of the entry in the Church's Register of Catechumens. It is worth noting that a Catechumen is not generally a child waiting to be baptised unless that child has also been entered on the Register of Catechumens as this is a regulated status.

The **Eastern Christian Churches** (other than the Eastern Catholic Churches) include the Orthodox Churches and other Eastern Churches whose sacraments are recognised by the Catholic Church; membership of an Eastern Christian Church is normally demonstrated by a certificate of baptism or a certificate of reception from the authorities of that Church.

Both of these categories should be given priority over all other non-Catholic applicants (except looked after and previously looked after children).

3.2.3 Other Faiths

The College reserves the right to prioritise learners of other Christian denominations and other faiths should the College be oversubscribed. However, these would always rank below Catholic criteria, Catechumens, members of Eastern Christian Churches and looked after and previously looked after children.

3.3 General Principles

The College welcomes applications from all sectors of the community. The College adopts a trauma-informed approach to ensure a supportive admissions process for all.

Admissions decisions are based on published entry criteria, academic qualifications, and applicant aptitude.

Applicants are required to declare accurate information and attend guidance sessions prior to offers being made.

Applications from learners with additional learning needs, learning disabilities and/or difficulties are considered on the same grounds as all others, however, applicants are asked to provide details of any support needs during the application process. This is to ensure that the college can meet the applicants support needs and ensure that the support is in place before they join their course. Any delays in sharing this information may limit the college's ability to ensure that timely and appropriate support arrangements are in place.

Applicants are expected to agree as a condition of admission to the college to attend pastoral tutorial lessons, general religious education (spiritual reflection) and for those undertaking a Level 3 programme of study, the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales qualification as a core part of their programme of learning.

3.4 Applicants with a Disclosure

Applicants must disclose unspent criminal convictions as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974). Such disclosures are handled confidentially in accordance with the College's Learners and Applicants with Criminal Convictions Policy, Safeguarding and Equality Policies. A disclosure does not automatically preclude admission but will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Disclosure of any bail conditions (including pre-charge bail) is also a condition of enrolment at the college and learners are expected to disclose any changes with regard to this on an ongoing basis.

3.5 Unsuccessful Applications

The College reserves the right to:

3.5.1 Review and refuse admission or progression to applicants who have previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution.

3.5.2 Review and refuse admission or progression for applicants where there is evidence that they could be a threat or a danger to themselves, others or the College's property or reputation, or if there is evidence they could negatively impact on the wellbeing of others. This relates to the college's duty of care to learners, its safeguarding obligations, and staff.

3.5.3 Review and refuse admission or progression to any applicant who is unable to meet the specific entry requirements of the programme or course. Falsification of entry qualifications by applicants may result in disciplinary action or the applicant being refused a place.

3.5.4 Review and refuse admission or progression to anyone who provides false or misleading information on an application or enrolment form.

3.5.5 Review and refuse admission or progression to any learners who we are unable to meet their educational needs.

3.5.6 In relation to points 3.5.1-3.5.5, the College also reserves the right to withdraw a place at any point afterwards, should relevant information come to light.

3.5.7 The College reserves the right to withdraw a course should there be an insufficient number of students enrolling onto the course.

3.6 Appeals

Should an applicant wish to appeal against refusal to a college course then this should be discussed informally with Learning Area Leaders or Deans.

Where no resolution at an informal stage is found, a formal written appeal will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedures.

3.7 Progression to a different level of study/year 2/RASMA

Progression to a different level of study requires the student to have passed the course in which they have been previously enrolled on.

Progression to the second year of study requires satisfactory completion of first-year assessments and/or external exams, unless there are extenuating circumstances which can be sufficiently evidenced. Definition of 'satisfactory' is course specific and further details can be found in the Admissions and Progression Procedures.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 **The Archbishop of Bishop of Cardiff-Menevia** as the religious authority for Catholic institutions, provides oversight relating to Catholic identity within the admissions process, particularly in regard to definitions of Catholicity and canonical matters.

4.2 **The Governing Body** will be responsible for ensuring that the Policy is reviewed on a regular basis (as per the policy terms of review) and appropriate advice is given on content and to approve the policy.

4.3 **The Principal** will be responsible for ensuring that the College's Admissions and Progression Policy and Procedures are fully implemented and followed by staff and that sufficient resource is allocated to the Admissions Department.

4.4 **The Senior Leadership Team** will review this Policy and Procedures. They will monitor the application of the Procedures, support staff to adhere to the Policy and Procedures and respond effectively to any areas of concern.

4.5 **The Vice Principal: Quality Improvement and Student Experience** will oversee the implementation of the Admissions and Progression Policy, provide appropriate training and development and ensure that appropriate steps are taken to monitor data linked to this Policy and that this data is used to inform and improve practice.

4.6 **The Director of Admissions** will oversee operational processes, including applicant guidance sessions and staff training.

4.7 **All staff** are responsible for:

4.7.1 Treating all learners with dignity and respect, to ensure their own conduct does not cause offence or misunderstanding.

4.7.2 Being aware of the Admissions and Progressions Policy and the Procedures and working in a way that does not contravene their content.

4.7.3 Working within the requirements of Data Protection and GDPR.

4.7.4 Communicating effectively with staff to ensure the needs of learners are met.

4.7.5 Attending training on aspects relevant to the success of this Policy and associated Procedures.

4.8 **Students** are responsible for:

4.8.1 Behaving in a way that supports the Policy across College.

4.8.2 Contributing to learner surveys and focus groups to provide feedback on the Policy and associated Procedures and how they impact.

4.8.3 Attending Induction and Pastoral Sessions so they are aware of the Policy and the issues it raises.

5. Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment Statement

An Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been conducted, confirming that the Policy positively supports equality of access and promotes the Welsh language. The Policy ensures that all applicants are treated fairly, with appropriate Welsh language support available in accordance with the College's Welsh Language Policy.

6. Communication and Storage

This policy is available in English and Welsh on the College website and the Every platform.

Accessible versions are available upon request.