

# MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL, MOUNTHAWK.

## SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY.

### Covering admissions from September 2011.

#### **1. Mission Statement**

*'Mercy Mounthawk Catholic Voluntary Secondary School is a witnessing community which fosters:*

- *The full potential of all staff and students*
- *A positive partnership between all members of the school and wider community*
- *The highest standards of teaching, learning and performance.'*

The School Enrolment Policy is based on the ethos enshrined in the above Mission Statement of the School, in the Educational Philosophy of the Mercy Order and in the CEIST charter.

As a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School in the Mercy tradition under the patronage of the CEIST Trust, Mercy Mounthawk sees itself as dedicated to the needs of all sections of society and will, therefore, promote participation and benefit for all, in as far as the school can fulfil the needs of an individual student.

#### **2. Operating Context**

The Board supports the underlying principles of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000. The school subscribes to the underlying principles of the legislation: partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion, respect for diversity, parental choice and equality. The following admissions policy is written in accordance with the provisions of these Acts.

In accordance with our Mercy ethos, we are dedicated to enabling the students to value their own uniqueness as sons and daughters of God and to inspiring them to a deep faith in Jesus Christ within the Catholic tradition. (*Mercy Philosophy of Education p.4*).

The school also upholds the values outlined in the CEIST charter. The Board of Management therefore upholds its right under section 7 (3) of the Equal Status Act 2000 to maintain the Catholic ethos of the school.

Management will further promote the Mercy character of the school by exercising special concern for the poor and disadvantaged students. (*Mercy Philosophy of Education p.8*) without prejudice to the rights of any student.

In achieving its mission, the school acknowledges the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs and languages.

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1 | Ratified by BOM, Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk, September 21<sup>st</sup> 2009. print 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 Amendments to sections 5, 8 and 10 ratified by BOM 20<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Amendment to section 10 ratified by the BOM on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2010. Amendments to Appendix 4 ratified on 18.08.10. Policy amended and ratified 22.08.11.

### **3. School Details**

3.1 Mercy Secondary School, Mounthawk is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School under the Patronage/Trusteeship of CEIST. We are a co-educational school.

### **3.2 Management:**

#### **Members of the Board of Management**

Chairperson of the Board: Mrs Margot O'Carroll

Parents' nominees: Mrs Roberta Kneeshaw, Mr Richard O'Halloran

Teachers' nominees: Mr Thomas O'Hanlon and Ms Elaine Costello

Trustees' nominees: Mrs Margot O'Carroll, Mr Michael Carmody, Mr Denis Cregan and Mrs Kathleen Rice.

Secretary to the Board: Mr John O'Roarke

Principal: Mr John O'Roarke

Deputy Principals: Mrs Eileen Kennelly and Mrs Nora Quane.

### **3.3 Organisations:**

Parents' Council

Students' Council

Local Home, School, Community, Liaison committee coordinated by parent volunteers

### **3.4 Teaching Resources and Curriculum**

The school is grant aided by the Department of Education.

The school requests a voluntary contribution from parents to assist in meeting the following costs:

(1) School journal: (2) student accident insurance: (3) Photocopying: (4) Identity Cards: (5) Computer licence fees: (6) Exam fees: (7) Administration Costs; post, envelopes, phone calls, etc...

Mercy Mounthawk has 82 teachers (2011/12) and 6 ancillary staff.

#### **Programmes:**

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the DES, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998. The following programmes are offered:

**The Junior Certificate Examination** at the end of the third year. Core subject are English, Irish, Maths, Religion, S.P.H.E., C.S.P.E. and P.E., History and Geography. Students may choose from the following options: French, Spanish, German, Business Studies, Science, Design Communication Graphics, Materials Technology Wood, Materials Technology Metal, Music, Art.

**The Leaving Certificate Examination:** at the end of a two-year Senior Cycle. Core subject in the Leaving cert programme are English, Irish, Maths, Religion and P.E. Students may choose from the following options: French, Spanish, German, Accounting, Economics, Business Studies, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Applied Maths, Music, Art, Home Economics, Design Communication Graphics (DCG), Building Construction and Engineering.

**Leaving Cert Applied:** a two-year senior Cycle programme which is available to students who wish to follow a practical or vocationally oriented programme. L.C.A. is a modular programme with continuous assessment over the two-year period.

**Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme:** a two year add-on to the traditional Leaving Certificate which provides a link with the world of work.

**Transition Year:** Transition Year offers a broader educational experience to students focusing on taster courses and work experience.

#### **Special Needs teachers:**

The school has a dedicated Special Needs Department, who in conjunction with the two career guidance teachers look after the special educational needs of students in the school in accordance with the SEN policy.

### **3.5 Extra-Curricular Activities**

As part of the holistic philosophy of education of the Mercy Order, the school offers a range of extra-curricular activities in order to promote the full personal development of the students. Each student in the school is encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Activities offered include: Public Speaking and Debating in English, Irish and German, Quiz teams in science, maths and general knowledge, Drama, Choir, coaching in leadership skills with the Rotary and Lions clubs.

In sports, Gaelic Football, Hurling, Basketball and Judo are organised for both boys and girls Participation in Golf, Athletics, Swimming, Handball, Badminton, Rugby and Soccer are also facilitated in the school

### **3.6 Administrative Information:**

The school day runs from 9.00 to 3.45 Monday to Friday. Mid-morning break occurs from 10.25 to 10.40 with Lunchtime from 1.10 to 2.00.

The school Office hours are from 8.30 to 4.15 daily.

The school can be contacted on 066 7102550 during office hours.

e-mail: [admin@mercymounthawk.ie](mailto:admin@mercymounthawk.ie)

web site: [www.mercymounthawk.ie](http://www.mercymounthawk.ie)

## **4. Application for admission as a First Year Student**

### **4.1 Application.**

Parents or guardians who wish to have their child(ren) considered for admission to the school as a first year student must complete a registration form on or before the closing date for applications.

The registration process will begin and registration forms will be made available on the first Monday after the Summer holidays when prospective students are in 6<sup>th</sup> class in Primary school. The closing date for applications will coincide with the subsequent School Open Day and will be advertised in the local community.

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered unless places remain unfilled following the offer of places to valid applicants. (Valid applicants are those whose application is received on or before the closing date). Late applicants may request to be added to the waiting list for consideration in these circumstances.

Registration Forms may be obtained from the School Secretary, during office hours, over the enrolment period. Registration forms must be returned to the school office *only by the parents/guardians* of the applicant. Forms will be countersigned by the office staff and the parents/guardians, dated and timed. Receipt of the form will also be logged in the school office. The applicant (parent/guardian) will receive a carbon copy of the form which must be retained as proof of registration. In the event of any query, applicants will be required to produce the carbon copy.

Other than those students already on the waiting list, operative until the 30<sup>th</sup> of September of that year, once the new school year has begun, applications from students for places in 1<sup>st</sup> year will be considered as an application to transfer from another secondary school and will be handled under section 5 of the policy below.

### **4.2 Open Day**

An Open Day will be held, and will be advertised in the local community.

### **4.3 Waiting List.**

A waiting list of applicants will be established after the process of allocation of places outlined in section 7 below has been followed. This waiting list will remain active until the 30<sup>th</sup> of September of the year of entry.

## **5. Application to transfer from other Second level schools**

An application for transfer is defined as one from a student who is currently or has been previously enrolled in another school in or out of the Tralee area, or from a student who makes an application after the start of the school year.

Where a student wishes to transfer from another second level school, an application must be made in writing to the Principal. The reason for the requested transfer must be clearly stated. The application should be accompanied by appropriate references to include (a) an academic progress report (b) a behaviour report and (c) a reference from the Principal of the previous school as per section 20 of the Education Welfare Act. The school reserves the right to consult with the school(s) from which the student is transferring in order to request a confidential reference, thereby to assess the application.

In deciding on an application the following criteria will be considered:

- Applications to transfer can and will only be considered subject to places being available in the school in the light of the Board's decision on the overall quota of students in the school. (*Quota for academic year 2011/12 is 1160 students*).

Should the overall number in the school be below the stated quota for that academic year, transfers can and will only be considered subject to a place in the relevant year group or class being available. Reference will also be made to availability and suitability of subjects or course choices.

- The application will be considered if the school is satisfied with the reason for transfer.
- The application will be considered on the basis of the references received. Where it is established that a student's behaviour is unacceptable in their previous school/schools, the Principal may decide not to accept such a student in the general Health and Safety and/or educational interest of the school community.
- The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any pupil in cases as outlined below in section 8 of this policy.

A decision on the application will be made in accordance with this policy and will be communicated to the parent/guardian within 21 days of the receipt of the written application. Any refusal of an application may be appealed in accordance with procedures in section 10 below.

A list for admission to higher years will be established from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October each year and will remain in place until 30<sup>th</sup> of September of the following year.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, where the Principal registers a student who is already registered in another recognised school, he/she is obliged to give written notification of the transfer to the Principal of the school in which the student was previously registered and the Principal of that other school must notify the Principal of any problems relating to school attendance that the student concerned had while attending the other school and such other matters relating to the student's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate.

Students who opt to transfer to another 2nd level school will have no automatic right of re-entry should they change their mind and indicate a wish to return to Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk.

## **6. Application to Repeat a Year**

Parents/guardians of students who wish their child(ren) to repeat a year must apply in writing to the Principal of the school before the 1<sup>st</sup> of May in the current academic year.

The school has the right to grant or refuse such a request, taking into account such Department of Education and Science guidelines as may apply from time to time.

## **7. Offer of Places to students in 1<sup>st</sup> year**

The Board of Management has amended the enrolment policy in relation to 1<sup>st</sup> year students as outlined in this section in response to the very significant changes in the enrolment policies and patterns of enrolment in the national schools in the Tralee area in the last few years. These changes have had a significant impact on the existing enrolment policy in Mounthawk to the point of rendering it unworkable. Consequently the changes in criteria outlined below have become necessary. The school reserves the right to continue to monitor the patterns of enrolment from the feeder national schools and amend this policy further at any time, if deemed necessary.

### **7.1 Offer places to first year students for 2012**

Where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, (*216 for September 2012*), places will be offered in accordance with these criteria in the following order of priority:

- 1<sup>st</sup> . Siblings of current students of Mounthawk and siblings of students who completed their post-primary education in Mounthawk, Balloonagh and Moyderwell Secondary Schools.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> . Children of staff members who are directly employed by the Board of Management on the date of enrolment and on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September of the student's year of entry.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> . Students who have completed their education in the Mercy ethos of Balloonagh and Moyderwell Primary schools.

80% of the places remaining after the allocation of places under the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> criteria will be allocated to students in this category. The number of places will be allocated to each school in proportion to the number of applicants from each school. For each school, places will be allocated on the basis of number of years enrolled in the school, as follows:

Places will be offered first to students who have spent 8 years on the DES roll for the school (i.e. from junior infants), next to those who have spent 7 years, 6 years down to those who have spent 1 year. In following this process, if and when at any point the number of applicants, with the same number of years in the school, exceeds the number of places remaining, these remaining places

will be distributed by lottery among these students. Any remaining applicants who do not qualify for this lottery will be included under the 4<sup>th</sup> criterion.

- 4<sup>th</sup>. The remaining 20% of places will be allocated to all other applicants (including applicants from Balloonagh and Moyderwell who did not qualify for inclusion in the lottery under the 3<sup>rd</sup> criterion<sup>1</sup>) on the basis of a lottery among all the valid applicants.

## **7.2 Operation of the random selection process**

The random selection process (lottery) will be overseen by a panel appointed by the Board of Management consisting of a representative of the Board (the Principal), a representative of the Parents' Council and an independent scrutineer appointed by the Board.

The name of each student entitled to participate in this selection process will be placed in one of three containers as appropriate, (one container for each of the two schools under the 3<sup>rd</sup> criterion and one container for students under the 4<sup>th</sup> criterion).

A member of the panel will draw names from each container, one by one, until the maximum number of places allocated for each school under criterion 3 and all the schools in under criterion 4 is reached.

The order in which the names are drawn from each container will be recorded on a numbered list. Places will be offered in the order in which names are drawn from the container until the allotment of places in each category has been filled.

The remaining names on each list (i.e. those students who have not received places in that category) will remain on a waiting list within the category and will be offered places in order should such places become available within the category. These waiting lists will remain in place until 30<sup>th</sup> September of the year of intake.

## **8. General procedures in relation to applications**

### **8.1 Handling application forms**

Registration Forms may be obtained from the School Secretary, during office hours, over the enrolment period. Registration forms must be returned to the school office only by the parents/guardians of the applicant. Forms will be countersigned by the office staff and the parents/guardians, dated and timed. Receipt of the form will also be logged in the school office. The applicant (parent/guardian) will receive a carbon copy of the form which must be retained as proof of registration. In the event of any query, applicants will be required to produce the carbon copy.

### **8.2 Decision making in relation to enrolment**

Decisions on enrolment will be made by the Board of Management of the school through those to whom it delegates this task.

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<sup>1</sup> This does not include applicants from Balloonagh or Moyderwell who, having been included in a lottery under the 3<sup>rd</sup> criterion, did not receive a place.

In accordance with the Education Welfare act, Section 19, the decision of the Board will be notified in writing to the parents not later than 21 days after the Open Day / Closing Date for Applications.

### **8.3 Exceptional cases**

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to any pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where:

1. the pupil has special needs such that even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Science the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education, or
2. in the opinion of the Board of Management the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, to the school staff or to school property.

### **8.4 Acceptance of Students into the school**

**All first year students** accepted for enrolment will be notified of the Admissions Day.

In order to be validly enrolled as a student of the school, the student, accompanied by his/her parents/guardians must:

- (a) attend the school in person on the date specified for admission and attend such meetings and assessments as may be provided  
and
- (b) in accordance with section 23 (4) of the Education Welfare act 2000, sign that they have read and understood the school behaviour code as issued to them and that said code is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by the student.  
and
- (c) sign that they understand that the school is a Catholic Voluntary school which subscribes to the Mercy ethos of education as contained in the 'Mercy Philosophy of Education' booklet as issued to them and that they are willing to accept the right of the school to uphold its ethos through the display and wearing of emblems and by other means.
- (d) All students must wear the school uniform, without modification, as prescribed.

### **For students transferring from another Second level school**

In order to be validly enrolled as a student of the school, the student(s) must

- (a) in accordance with section 23 (4) of the Education Welfare act 2000, sign that they have read and understood the school behaviour code as issued to them and that said code is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code.

and

- (b) sign that they understand that the school is a Catholic Voluntary school which subscribes to the Mercy ethos of education as contained in the 'Mercy Philosophy of Education' booklet as issued to them and that they are willing to accept the right of the school to uphold its ethos through the display and wearing of emblems and by other means.
- (c) All students must wear the school uniform, without modification, as prescribed.

## **9. Special Education Needs**

The Board of Management is committed to ensuring full entitlement and access for pupils with special education needs to high quality education with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.

We are committed to educating pupils with learning difficulties, wherever possible, alongside their peers within the normal curriculum of mainstream schools after giving due consideration to the appropriate wishes of their parents and the necessity to meet individual needs.

We seek to identify and assess pupils with learning difficulties as early and thoroughly as is possible and necessary in order to ensure that we can properly answer those needs. Therefore the school will open a dialogue with parents and the former school(s) attended by the student as early as possible, requesting all relevant information and reports in order to properly identify and assess needs.

Based on this assessment, the Board will then request the DES to provide resources such as special needs assistants, specialised equipment, furniture, adequate accommodation, transport etc so as to enable the school to discharge its duty correctly.

In offering a place to a student, the school must be satisfied that it is in a position to fulfil the educational needs of that student, subject to the support required from the Department of Education and Science in providing adequate human resources, skills and facilities. It is to be understood that the ability of the school to respond to the educational needs of any student applying for admission is contingent on the Department of Education supplying the appropriate facilities and resources to allow the school to answer that need. It may, therefore, be necessary for the Board of Management to defer attendance of a student pending provision of appropriate resources by the DES to meet the needs of that student.

It may furthermore be necessary for the Board to refuse a student if the DES does not provide adequate resources for his/her education. The school is mindful that subsection 5 of the Equal Status Act 2000, provides that subsection 2 does not apply to the extent that compliance with any of its provisions in relation to students with disabilities would, by virtue of the disability, make impossible, or have a serious detrimental effect, on the provisions by the school of its service to other students.

## **10. Right to appeal**

Where a decision is made to refuse enrolment of a students, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student or, in the case of a students who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, shall be informed of the decision by letter.

Initially, the applicant can appeal a refusal to enrol to the Board of Management. Appeals should be submitted in writing, outlining the grounds for the appeal, to the Secretary of the Board of Management. Appeals must be submitted within one calendar month (31 days) of the date of receipt of the refusal letter. The Board of Management will provide opportunity to the family or applicant to present the appeal to a sub-committee of the Board.

Further to an unsuccessful appeal to the Board of Management and pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, there is a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against a decision of the Board of Management to refuse to enrol a student. This right of appeal can be exercised by the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, by the student.

Appeals must be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the School was notified to the parent/guardian or student. As a general rule, appeals will only be considered by the appeals committee under section 29 where the parties are unable to resolve the issue at local level. Accordingly, the appellant and the Board of Management will first consider the matter at local level to see if an accommodation can be reached

Appeals to the Secretary General must be made in writing on the appropriate form (a copy is available in the school). The appellant should at the same time notify the school of any appeal or, alternatively, send a copy of the completed Application Form to the school.

## **11. Resources**

The Principal will undertake to make personnel available to implement the undertakings in this policy.

The Principal will also make available, within the provision of the DES, resources to execute these tasks.

## **12. Adoption and Evaluation**

This school enrolment policy was adopted by the Board of Management of the school.

The policy may be reviewed and evaluated as deemed necessary by the Board.

## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1. Application Forms:**

Application Form for enrolment as a First Year Student  
Application Form for enrolment as a Higher Year student.  
Enrolment Form. (Attached Documents)

### **Appendix 2. Code of Behaviour:**

See Attached Document

### **Appendix 3. School Prospectus:**

See Attached Document.

## **Appendix 4 Policies on admission into Transition Year, L.C.A. and Repeat Leaving Certificate**

### **4.1 APPLICATION FOR LCA**

#### **4.1.1 The course**

The Leaving Certificate Applied is a distinct, self-contained two-year Leaving Certificate.

It is designed for those students who do not wish to proceed directly to third level education or for those whose needs, aspirations and aptitudes are not adequately catered for by the traditional Leaving Certificate.

The fundamental goal of the Leaving Certificate Applied is to prepare students for transition from the world of the school to that of adult and working life.

The programme sets out to recognise the talents of all students and to provide opportunities for developing personal responsibility, self-esteem and self-knowledge and helps students apply what they learn to the real world. The Leaving Certificate Applied is characterised by educational experiences of an active, practical and student-centred nature.

The Leaving Certificate Applied consists of a range of courses, each designed on a modular basis. A module is of thirty hours duration. Each year of the two-year programme is divided into two semesters, September to January and February to June, to facilitate the modular structure of the courses. A module within a given course is usually completed within a semester. Over the two-year duration of the programme the participants will complete 44 modules.

#### **4.1.2 Application process**

An information night is provided for parents on Senior cycle options after which application forms are made available. Applications are accepted up to the deadline printed on the form. Application received after that date may not be considered if sufficient places are not available.

Entry into LCA is on the basis of application and based on a set of criteria which reflect the nature of the year. (*The criteria are outlined on the application form.*)

Students who apply may be interviewed on the basis of the criteria in order to ascertain their suitability for the course and whether or not it would be in their best interests to avail of this course. In this process consideration is given to the input of teachers who are involved with the student.

The assignment of a student to Leaving Cert Applied is considered final once the offer of a place has been accepted by the student and his/her parents or guardians.

## **4.2 APPLICATION FOR TRANSITION YEAR**

### **4.2.1 The Course**

The general aim of the Transition Year is the preparation of young people for their roles as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society. The programme, therefore, aims to provide young people with the skills and support necessary to develop their own individual talents, aptitudes and abilities with regard to future educational and/or vocational preparation.

#### **Emphasis is placed on:**

- (a) Education for maturity, and spiritual and personal development, including social awareness and increased social competence.
- (b) The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on self-directed learning.
- (c) Education through experience of working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.

#### **Aims of Programme:**

- (a) To provide an opportunity for all students to mature intellectually, socially, physically and spiritually.
- (b) To consolidate and develop the learning experience of the student which has taken place during the Junior Cycle.
- (c) To develop study habits more suited to Senior Cycle and Third Level and to encourage the development of self-directed learning in all students so as to enable them to achieve at 3<sup>rd</sup> Level.
- (d) To foster a growing sense of responsibility in the student for his/her own life so that he/she may become a responsible, socially conscious citizen, able to cope successfully with the demands of society and of life.
- (e) To encourage students to value inter-personal relationships and to inculcate this through team-work and project work.
- (f) To introduce the student actively to the world of work so that they will learn to work with others and develop a good working relationship with others and learn to engage in dialogue with others in a respectful way.

### 4.2.1 Application process

Transition Year is not a compulsory part of the curriculum in Mounthawk. Students may wish to avail of the course as one of the Senior cycle options and can apply for the course at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

An information night is provided for parents and students on Senior Cycle options after which application forms are made available. Applications are accepted up to the deadline printed on the form. Applications received after that date may not be considered if sufficient places are not available.

Due to pressure of number in the school, Transition Year will be capped at 4 class groups for September 2012. The application process will be as follows

Stage 1. A number of criteria have been developed for entry into Transition Year based on the capacity of the students to engage with the course as demonstrated during the Junior Cycle and in particular during the previous school year. These criteria are printed on the application form.

Students who apply may be interviewed on the basis of the criteria in order to ascertain their suitability for the course and whether or not it would be in their best interests to avail of this course. On this basis a short listing of candidates will occur.

In this process consideration is given to the input of teachers who are involved with the student.

Stage 2. Following the interview/short listing process, should the number of applicants exceed the number of available places, there will be a random selection process for places on the course.

Stage 3. Offers of places are made in writing to students after the applications process is completed.

Places are secured by returning the letter and on receipt of the specified instalment of the course fee.<sup>2</sup>

The assignment of a student to Transition Year is considered final once the offer of a place has been accepted by the student and his/her parents or guardians.

Continuation of students in Transition Year is conditional on their continued good behaviour in the year and students can be moved from Transition Year into 5<sup>th</sup> year on recommendation from the Discipline committees.

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the cost of providing the enhanced curriculum in Transition Year, there will be a fee covering outings, photocopying and admissions charges for events.

## 4.3 APPLICATIONS FOR REPEAT LEAVING CERTIFICATE

### 4.3.1. Criteria

The school will consider requests to repeat the Leaving Certificate from students. Priority will be given to students of the school and only thereafter to students from other schools. As distinct from students enrolled in Mounthawk, repeat applicants from other schools are considered under Section 5 of the policy above, as requests for Transfer.

While the school sees itself as having a commitment to our own students in relation to repeat Leaving Certificate, all applications for repeat, whether from students from within or without the school, will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- capacity of the school, in terms of numbers, to take repeat candidates
- capacity to provide students with requested options
- The application must be received by the stated closing date on the application form.
- previous compliance with school behaviour code
- previous record in terms of work rate and effort in class
- previous attendance record

Decisions on the last 3 criteria will be based on school reports and records. Students applying from outside the school will be asked to provide references and reports from their previous schools.

### 4.3.2 Requirements of students

Mercy Mounthawk does not have the facility to guarantee a *separate* Leaving Certificate Repeat class in any academic year due to pressure of numbers.

Should students be accepted for repeating, we expect a high standard in regard to study and behaviour, for the sake of their own success and as an example to the other students who do have their experience to draw upon. In particular we would like to stress the following:

1. Repeat students are expected to behave like all other students and obey the school discipline code. In addition to this, particular conditions may be outlined in an I.B.P drawn up by the school on the basis of which the student is accepted for a repeat Leaving Certificate year in the school.
2. They must attend school from 9.00 to 3.45 as with other students.
3. Full uniform is expected at all times.
4. They must take at least 6 subjects plus Religious Education.
5. Students who have free classes during the day will attend supervised study provided by the school.

The requirements outlined here will form the basis of a contract to be signed by the prospective repeat student on the basis of which they will be accepted to repeat. Breach of this contract will result of termination of the repeat arrangements.

## **Appendix 5. Statement of Strategy on Attendance:**

In Accordance with section 22 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, the following sections outlines the strategies the school proposes to adopt to foster an appreciation of learning among students and those strategies to encourage regular attendance.

An appreciation of learning will be fostered through the following strategies:

- Career guidance classes will endeavour to underline the opportunities that are opened to students through learning.
- Modules will be developed in S.P.H.E. in Junior cycle to encourage learning among students and to support students in learning through developing study skills.
- Students will be encouraged in learning through regular feedback given through the correction of exercises by the teachers and the term reports. Students are best encouraged in their learning through a good relationship with their teachers.
- Tutors and Year Heads will endeavour to support and encourage students in their work.

Regular attendance will be encouraged through the following strategies.

- Attendance is monitored on a daily basis by the class tutors, who are in a immediate position to notice patterns of non-attendance and to speak to the students.
- Any pattern of non-attendance will be notified to the assistant year head who will communicate with the family at the earliest convenience.
- Dialogue with parents is understood by the school to be of vital importance in addressing attendance issues.
- The H.S.C.L. teacher will be involved in the such dialogue.
- Those students identifies as being at risk of dropping out will be identified by the Learning support Department and the Pastoral Care Departments in the school.
- Such students will be supported by the development of a mentor system in the school. In this regard the school hopes to work with local bodies such as K.D.Y.S., the Shanakill Family Support Centre, Local study support groups and the I.T.T. outreach programme in the provision of specifically targeted courses to support these students.

**Appendix 6. Statement of strategy on the involvement of Parents in the operation of the school.**

In accordance with section 26 of the Education Act 1998, a parents Association will be established in the school in order to promote the interests of students in co-operation with the board and the staff of the school.

The Parents Association will elect at an A.G.M. a Parents' Council that will co-ordinate the partnership of parents and teachers in the school for the year.

In accordance with section 26.b of the Education Act 1998, the following programme of activities will be initiated to promote the involvement of parents in the school.

**Appendix 7. Statement of strategy on the involvement of Students in the operation of the school.**

In accordance with the Education Act 1998 the following procedures will be adopted by the school to inform students of activities within the school.

- Students will be informed of activities in the school through the following means:
  - The School Bulletin Boards
  - Notices read at the Tutorial meetings each morning
  - Notices read over the intercom
  - The School newsletter.

The following procedures will be adopted to involve students in the operation of the school.

- A Student Council will be established in the school under the direction of a teacher whose Post of Responsibility it will be to co-ordinate the activities of the council.
- The students Council will be formed of the elected representative of the students in the school. Each class will elect a representative from their group. Two representatives from each year group will form the student council, which will be headed by the Head Boy and Head Girl, both nominated by the school management.
- The Student Council will have the following 3 functions:
  - To represent the interests of the students in the school, by forwarding and discussing issues which are of concern to the student body with management.
  - To act as a consultative body on the development of policies within the school.
  - To dialogue with management on the development of initiatives from management within the school.

## **Appendix 8. Induction Programme for incoming first year students.**

### **1 Aims:**

- To ensure the smooth induction of new students into Mercy Secondary School, Mounthawk.
- To create a friendly and welcoming environment for new students so that they feel secure.

### **2 Preliminary Visit.**

The induction process for first year students will include visits to feeder Primary schools and an open day at the school where prospective students and their parents are invited to view the school and its facilities.

A prospectus will be produced for the school, which will be available for distribution.

Members of the staff may visit our feeder Primary Schools to talk to the pupils and answer questions about the school.

### **3 Enrolment Day.**

In accordance with section 5 above, Parents and guardians of applicants (along with the applicant) must attend an enrolment meeting where rules, procedures and ethos will be outlined.

### **4 September induction.**

There will be a phased induction with only First Year students at school on the first day. Students will be assigned to classes primarily on the basis of the subjects chosen by them.

Students will have an induction programme, which will consist of:

- An orientation session to familiarise themselves with the school
- A fire drill where they will be shown the exits and brought through the procedures
- An introduction to organisation for class work; recording homework in journals, packing bags etc...
- Be given their time-table
- Meet with the Year Head and their class tutors, and members of the Pastoral Care team.
- Be given a clear explanation of the rules and discipline procedures
- Be given a clear statement regarding bullying and an indication of how to get help if they are victims.

### **5 Student Mentor Programme.**

The school will run a Student Mentor Programme where older students (Fifth Years) will undertake peer ministry to the First Year students in order to provide support in the initial months in the school.

## 6 Parents.

- Parents should ensure that all relevant information on a student who has any difficulty e.g. medical, physical, behavioural, academic etc. is passed onto the Principal, Deputy Principal or the Year Head. This information should be communicated as early as possible in the year.
- Likewise any difficulties experienced by their children, that parents become aware of, should be communicated to the Year Head as early as possible in order to allow for intervention.
- Parents will be given an opportunity to meet with Year Head in order to discuss any problems their children are having.
- Parents attend a Parent/teacher meeting where academic progress can be discussed.
- Teachers and parents can communicate using the journal system.