

ST MARY’S CHRISTIAN BROTHERS’ GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Principal: Mr Brendan McComb, BA Hon, PGCE, MSc

Chairperson of the Board of Governors: Mr Sean Mahon

**Voluntary Grammar School
Boys’ Grammar**

Age Range: 11-18

Admissions No: 175

Enrolment No: 1180

OPEN EVENING INFORMATION

Wednesday 15th January 2025 – 7.00 pm and Thursday 16th January 2025 – 7.00 pm

Parents and pupils will be invited via primary schools, parishes, and the local press.

To Parents/Guardians/Carers naming St Mary’s Christian Brothers’ Grammar School as a preference on their child’s Online Transfer Form/Application or its equivalent.

SEAG Entrance Assessment Results: In assessing academic ability, St. Mary’s Christian Brothers’ Grammar School will use the Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS), awarded to pupils completing the SEAG Entrance Assessment (scheduled for Saturday, 16th November 2024 and Saturday, 23rd November 2024) as specified by the school. Parents/Guardians must enter the applicant’s Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) from the SEAG Entrance Assessment and upload a copy of the applicant’s statement of results with the Transfer Application. Results will be available on 25th January 2025.

Special Circumstances or Special Provisions: If you are applying for Special Circumstances or Special Provisions, please see the relevant sections below.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION

All pupils are asked to pay a Voluntary Contribution of £60 per annum to assist with the provision of additional facilities and equipment.

RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS TO THE SCHOOL

The Board of Governors draws up the admissions criteria and delegates to an Admissions Committee, which includes the Principal, the responsibility for applying these criteria. Any reference herein to the term the ‘Board of Governors’ includes any Committee or Sub-Committee appointed by the Board of Governors for the purposes of applying the Admission criteria set out herein.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

St. Mary’s Christian Brothers’ Grammar School is a boys, selective voluntary grammar school. The school accepts those who are academically suited for the type of education it offers whose parents/guardians are in agreement with the Catholic philosophy and aims of the school.

The Board of Governors has determined that the educational outcomes from the SEAG Entrance Assessment will be used to admit applicants (see criteria A to F and subsidiary criteria H1 to H5) Information on the SEAG Entrance Assessment is available from the school or from www.stmaryscbgs.com.

In accordance with the 1997 Education (Northern Ireland) Order (Section 16 (4)), pupils resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission will be selected for admission before any child not so resident may be selected.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND SPECIAL PROVISION PROCEDURES

Applicants claiming Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions (see below) will be considered first. In light of the documentary evidence submitted, the Admissions Committee of the Board of Governors will decide whether these applicants should be considered under the Total Standardised Age Score actually achieved in the SEAG Entrance Assessment or an allocated higher Total Standardised Age Score. The school will use a Special Circumstances Protocol (available from the school on request) to decide if any increase in Total Standardised Age Score is required. Once a decision has been made, the applicant will then be considered along with all applicants of the same Total

Standardised Age Score for the purpose of applying the Admissions Criteria.

The Board of Governors will NOT use as a criterion the position of preference given to the school on the Transfer Application, i.e., an applicant who has chosen St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School in any position on the Online Transfer Form/Application or its equivalent will be considered equally with those who have put the School first.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR YEAR 8 PUPILS TO ST. MARY'S CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

In order to determine which applicants will be accepted into Year 8 in St. Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School, the following criteria will be applied in the order set down:

- A** Applicants who have been awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 1 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants to whom Special Circumstances or Special Provisions apply and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are in the opinion of the Board of Governors of a comparable ability to applicants awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 1.
- B** Applicants who have been awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 2 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants to whom Special Circumstances or Special Provisions apply and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are in the opinion of the Board of Governors of a comparable ability to applicants awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 2.
- C** Applicants who have been awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 3 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants to whom Special Circumstances or Special Provisions apply and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are in the opinion of the Board of Governors of a comparable ability to applicants awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 3.
- D** Applicants who have been awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 4 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants to whom Special Circumstances or Special Provisions apply and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are in the opinion of the Board of Governors of a comparable ability to applicants awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 4.
- E** Applicants who have been awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 5 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants to whom Special Circumstances or Special Provisions apply and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are in the opinion of the Board of Governors of a comparable ability to applicants awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 5.
- F** Applicants who have been awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 6 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants to whom Special Circumstances or Special Provisions apply and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are in the opinion of the Board of Governors of a comparable ability to applicants awarded a total Standardised aged score (TSAS) which resides in Band 6.
- G** Other applicants.

Parents/Guardians must upload a copy of the applicant's statement of results from the SEAG Entrance Assessment with the Transfer Application.

The Total Standardised Aged Scores (TSAS) will be placed in rank order for all applicants. Places will be allocated to those applicants ranked in order from 1 to 175. In the event that the Total Standardised Aged Scores are ranked and there is a tie in ranks which means that the 175th place cannot be determined, the following subsidiary criteria of H1 to H5 will be applied to the tied applicants and places allocated in accordance with these. If, on application of the subsidiary criteria in order, there is oversubscription in a particular criterion, then the next criterion will be applied to determine the allocation of places.

- H1** Applicants who have a brother currently enrolled in St Mary's (**The name of the child of the family and his year group are required on the Transfer Application**).
- H2** Applicants who, at the date of their application, are the eldest son of the family (*"of the family" will be defined in accordance with Department of Education guidance*), or the eldest child or the only child at the date of application, eligible to transfer to St Mary's. This criterion will treat twins or other multiples as joint eldest.

If a boy has an older brother who did not gain entry to St. Mary's in previous years due to not sitting the entrance assessment or who applied to St. Mary's but did not achieve a grade which enabled him to gain entry, he should be considered with all first/oldest boys (evidence must be provided).

The parents/guardians must provide evidence stating that the son is the eldest and that the son and family are known for at least two years to the verifier of such evidence. It must be written on headed notepaper and signed by a verifier who is not a member of the applicant's family. Examples of this might include a medical practitioner, a solicitor, a Priest/Minister of Religion, or a Primary School Principal.

H3 Boys transferring from Primary Schools under the ERST trusteeship of the Christian Brothers: John Paul II Primary School and St Patrick's Primary School.

H4 Boys transferring from our listed feeder schools (not listed in order of preference):

Ballymacrickett, Ballymacward, Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain, Bunscoil Phobal Feirste, Bunscoil an tSleibhe Dhuibh, Christ the Redeemer, Cranmore Integrated, Good Shepherd, Gaelscoil na bhFal, Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach, Gaelscoil na Móna, Good Shepherd, Hazelwood, Holy Child, Holy Cross, Holy Evangelists, Holy Family, Holy Rosary, Holy Trinity, Oakwood, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Our Lady of Lourdes, Scoil na Fuisseoige, Sacred Heart Primary School, St. Aloysius, St. Anne's, St. Bernard's, St. Bride's, St. Clare's, St. Colman's (Lambeg), St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph's (Slate Street), St. Joseph's (Carryduff), St. Joseph's (Lisburn), St. Joseph's (Crumlin), St. Ita's, St. Kevin's, St. Kieran's, St MacNissi's, St. Malachy's, St. Mary's (Divis Street), St Mary's- on-the-Hill, St. Matthew's, St. Michael's, St. Oliver Plunkett, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, St. Teresa's, St. Therese of Lisieux, St Vincent de Paul, Scoil an Droichid, Scoil NBa fuisseoige, Tonagh (Lisburn).

H5 In the event of oversubscription at the last criterion, selection for all places remaining in this category will be on the basis of the initial letter of the surname as **identified on the birth certificate** (if the surname has subsequently been legally changed ((evidence to be provided)) this new surname will be used) presented at registration for the SEAG Entrance Assessment. In the event of surnames beginning with the same letter, the subsequent letters of the surname will be used in alphabetical order using the randomised selection below. In the event of two or more identical surnames the alphabetical (randomised) order of the initial of the forenames will be used. Where names cannot be separated by this process, children will be accepted by date of birth with preference given to the oldest.

The order is set out below:

H W U M Q F K A T E V S I B C X J G Z O R N D P L Y

The order was predetermined by random computerised selection, witnessed by a representative from the Board of Governors.

The subsidiary criteria H1 to H5 will be applied in the order set down.

ADMISSIONS FOR ENTRY OF PUPILS TO FORM 1 (YEAR 8) IN SEPTEMBER 2025

NOTE: IT IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN/CARER OF A PROSPECTIVE PUPIL TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS SUBMITTED, EITHER ON THE ONLINE TRANSFER FORM/APPLICATION OR ITS EQUIVALENT OR TOGETHER WITH THE ONLINE TRANSFER FORM/APPLICATION OR ITS EQUIVALENT, ALL THE INFORMATION REQUIRED TO ENABLE THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS TO APPLY THE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA OF THE SCHOOL TO THE APPLICATION OF THE PROSPECTIVE PUPIL. ONLY EVIDENCE SUBMITTED EITHER ON THE ONLINE TRANSFER FORM/APPLICATION OR ITS EQUIVALENT OR ATTACHED TO THAT FORM AT THE TIME OF SUBMISSION TO THE SCHOOL FOR ADMISSION SHALL BE CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS IN THE ALLOCATION OF A PLACE TO THE APPLICANT. **The final date/time for receipt of new applications/documentation in support of applications is Tuesday 25th February 2025 at 4pm.**

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Two documents are available on the school website www.stmaryscbgs.com for the parents / guardians of children who have taken the SEAG Entrance Assessment 2024 and wish to claim Special Circumstances:

- Claiming Special Circumstances – A Guide for Parents & Guardians
- Claim for Special Circumstances (Form SC)

The school has academic performance as its first criterion. Special Circumstances refers to the claim that a child experienced a medical or other problem which may have affected his performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.

Special Circumstances must be outlined on Claim for Special Circumstances (Form SC) and supported by documentary evidence of a medical, educational or other appropriate nature. Documentary evidence must be submitted with the Transfer Application and Form SC on the Education Authority's online Portal – EA Post Primary Applications.

Circumstances relating to an application for Special Circumstances must apply at the time of the SEAG Entrance Assessment. A Special Circumstances claim will not be considered without such evidence.

Consideration of a claim for Special Circumstances consists of four stages. Stage 1 requires consideration of whether there is, in the judgement of the Admissions Committee, sufficient contemporaneous medical, professional or other evidence to warrant acceptance that the case is valid for consideration under Special Circumstances. If an applicant is permitted to be considered as having Special Circumstances, Stage 2 requires acceptance by the Admissions Committee that there are extenuating circumstances that warrant acceptance of a late submission. Stage 3 requires an educational judgement to be made by the Admissions Committee on the verifiable educational evidence provided to assess if the Total Standardised Age Score achieved by the child in the SEAG Entrance Assessment does not correspond to the academic ability of the child. If Stage 1, Stage 2 and 3 are met, at Stage 4 the Admissions Committee will award a mark up to the top of the confidence band in the Special Circumstance Protocol (available from the school on request), taking into account the nature of the Special Circumstances claimed by each individual.

The Board of Governors may decide in relation to an applicant claiming special circumstances, that the Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) which the applicant in fact achieved in the SEAG Entrance Assessment is the Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) which the applicant would have achieved if he had sat the SEAG Entrance Assessment under normal circumstances.

Once a decision has been made the applicant will be considered alongside all other applicants who have been awarded a Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) equivalent and the admissions criteria applied.

If a claim for Special Circumstances is made in respect of matters for which Access Arrangements were provided to an applicant sitting the SEAG Entrance Assessment on 16th and/or 23rd November 2024, the Admissions Committee may take into account the fact that the applicant was provided with such Access Arrangements.

Note on COVID-19

Special Circumstances will not be applied solely due to lost teaching and learning time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific COVID-19 impacts which are unique to the applicant may, however, still be applicable to Special Circumstances.

Details of Medical or Other Problems

Where it is claimed that an applicant's performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessment has been affected by a medical or other problem, **independent** evidence of its existence must be provided to the school. Where the issue is of a medical nature of short-term duration, which affected the applicant only at the time of the SEAG Entrance Assessment, the school will require the production of evidence that the applicant was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time of the SEAG Entrance Assessment. Where the issue is of a non-medical nature, the parents/guardians **must** set the precise details of the issue and append independent evidence, verified by an appropriate professional, with the transfer Application to corroborate its existence.

Independent Evidence of Medical or Other Problems

This evidence should be verified (on headed paper) by one of the following who is not a member of the applicant's family:

- a primary school Principal
- a registered health or social care professional
- a medical practitioner
- a lawyer
- a member of the clergy

Details of Educational Evidence

Educational evidence must be provided by the parents/guardians on Form SC, verified by the primary school Principal, to enable the Admissions Committee of the Board of Governors to reach a decision. The Board of Governors will, when considering the weight to be given to submitted evidence, **consider standardised test results as ranking in priority to other submitted evidence.**

The following information should be provided on form SC: -

- Records of the results of all available KS2 CAT4 (verbal and quantitative) and/or PTE/PTM results. These must be verifiable and must be signed off by the Primary School Principal. The verified results must be attached to the Online Transfer Form/Application or its equivalent.
- All test results should be accompanied by the name of the standardised test supplier, and be dated and verified by the primary school (e.g., signature of Principal, School stamp/headed notepaper).
- Any other relevant educational material from the Primary School.

NB: The existence of special circumstances **DOES NOT** in itself lead to automatic admission to St. Mary's. Each case is considered on its own merits by the Board of Governors.

General Note on Special Circumstances

It is emphasised that the **onus is on the parents/guardians/carers** to ensure that the above information is provided by the primary school. Failure to provide such information may result in the school being unable to consider the application for Special Circumstances. **Parents/guardians/carers have a statutory right to request and obtain information on their child.** Further information on the rights to access pupil records is available from the Information Commissioner's Office or from the following website: <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Please note that judgement of the importance of documentation forwarded in support of Special Circumstances will be at the discretion of the Admissions Committee of the Board of Governors.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS

Two documents are available on the school website at www.stmaryscbgs.com for the parents/guardians of children who wish to claim Special Provisions:

- Claiming Special Provisions - A Guide for Parents & Guardians
- Application for Special Provisions (Form SP)

Special Provisions may be made by the Admissions Committee of the Board of Governors where the applicant:

1. has received more than half of their education* outside Northern Ireland; or
*based on the time from the start of Primary 1 (1st September 2018) to the 28th February 2025 i.e. more than 3 years and 3 months.
2. wishes to transfer to a post-primary school that uses the SEAG Entrance Assessment from a school outside Northern Ireland; or
3. due to a serious medical or other problems, which are supported by appropriate documentary evidence, was EITHER unable to sit the SEAG Entrance Assessment OR has an estimated outcome because they only sat one of the two Entrance Assessment papers.

Applicants under criterion 1 and 2 above, who wish to apply under Special Provisions, do not need to take the SEAG Entrance Assessment unless their parents/guardians so wish, in which case the SEAG Entrance Assessment Band and TSAS obtained will be used to determine admission in accordance with the Admissions Criteria.

If you are making a claim for Special Provisions on the grounds that your child fulfils **criteria (1)** above, you should obtain a letter on school headed notepaper from your child's current primary school signed by the school Principal which shows the total dates of your child's education within Northern Ireland. This information is available to the primary school Principal through the SIMS School History section.

If you are making a claim for Special Provisions on the grounds that your child fulfils **criteria (2)** above, you should obtain a letter on school headed notepaper from your child's current primary school signed by the school Principal confirms your child's home address outside Northern Ireland.

If you are making a claim for Special Provisions on the grounds that your child fulfils **criteria (3)** above, you should provide a letter from your child's GP or Medical Consultant or another appropriate professional indicating the nature

of the serious medical problems or reason for the absence and/or how it prevented your child from sitting the SEAG Entrance Assessment or from taking either Paper 1 or Paper 2.

Parents/ Guardians should follow the guidance in the document, '*Claiming Special Provisions – A Guide for Parents and Guardians*' available from the school website www.stmaryscbgs.com Any parent/guardian/carer claiming Special Provisions must complete and submit a **SP form** (also available to download from the school website, www.stmaryscbgs.com . This documentation, together with the independent, verifiable documentary evidence which corroborates the Special Provisions claim, must be attached to the Online Transfer Form/Application or its equivalent and include the SP form.

For those pupils currently in P7 in primary schools in Northern Ireland, claims for Special Provisions should be made on **Form SP** and uploaded with the Transfer Application by **Thursday, 20th February 2025 (12 noon)**. After this date, claims for Special Provisions should be made directly to St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School, and parents should notify the Education Authority's School Admissions Team. The final date/time for receipt of new applications/documentation in support of applications is **Tuesday 25th February at 4pm**.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to complete Form SP, provide the documentary evidence and the required educational evidence, and to upload this evidence with the Transfer Application. The Board of Governors will assess each applicant's claim for Special Provisions and may contact the parent to arrange further assessment of the child by a suitably qualified person or body approved by the school. This will be known as the additional special provision test (AAT). The Admissions Committee will then determine, based on the information available, an appropriate TSAS equivalent for the applicant. Such applicants will then be considered with all other applicants who have received a SEAG Entrance Assessment Band and TSAS and the Admissions Criteria will be applied.

Where St. Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School is not the applicant's first preference school and the applicant has sat a Special Provisions Assessment (AAT) in another school, St. Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School will use the results of that Special Provisions Assessment (AAT) in the Special Provisions Procedure.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS ENTITLEMENT (FSME)

The Board of Governors reflected carefully on the Department's guidance on admissions criteria and particularly on the criterion of Free School Meals (FSME). The Board believe that this will be fulfilled as a natural outcome of our intake. In the last school year of 2023-24, St. Mary's had an average of 34% of our students entitled to FSM while, in the same period, the overall grammar school average was 13.7%

RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on **28th January 2025 at 12 noon (GMT)** and an application submitted by the closing date of **20th February 2025 at 12 noon (GMT)** will be treated as a punctual application. An application received **after 12 noon (GMT) on 20th February 2025 and up to 4pm on 25th February 2025** will be treated as a late application.

DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any applicant's Transfer Application.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

WAITING LIST

All applications that are refused will be placed on a waiting list. Should a vacancy arise after the transfer results are published, we will accept additional information not received at the time of the transfer process. We will also accept new applications from pupils who did not initially apply through the Transfer process. The published criteria above will be applied. This waiting list will be in place until 30th June 2026.

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

| Year | Admissions No | Total Applications <i>i.e., All preferences</i> | Total Admissions * |
|----------------|----------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 2022/23 | 175 | 243 | 177 |
| 2023/24 | 175 | 197 | 177 |
| 2024/25 | 175 | 190 | 177 |

* Includes Special Educational Needs students

Criteria for Years 9 and onwards: Available on request from the school or can be viewed on the school website.