

SACRED HEART GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Principal: Mr. S Comer BEng, PGCE, MEd

Chairperson Board of Governors: Mrs Posey Gilsenan

**Voluntary Grammar
Girls**

Age Range: 11-18

Admission No: 120

Enrolment No: 875

To Parents/Guardians naming the Sacred Heart Grammar School as a Preference on your child's Transfer Application

In assessing academic ability Sacred Heart Grammar School intends to use the result awarded to pupils completing the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG) Entrance Assessments on Saturday 16th & Saturday 23rd November 2024. Parents/guardians must upload a copy of the result slip which they receive on Saturday 25 January 2025 with the online Transfer Application and the band should also be entered on the Transfer Application.

A Capital Fee (currently £75) is reviewed annually.

A copy of the Prospectus is available from the school Office.

Respective functions of the Board of Governors and Principal in relation to Admissions to the school

The Board of Governors has delegated the responsibilities for the task of applying the criteria as indicated below to the principal or subcommittee. Where this policy refers to the decision taken by the Board of Governors, it is with reference to the work of the subcommittee set up by the Board, with its full approval and subject to its final ratification or to work delegated to the principal by the Board of Governors with its full approval and subject to its final ratification.

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-2026

Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry is a Catholic grammar school for girls. This school normally accepts girls who are academically suited for the type of education it offers and whose parents/guardians agree with the philosophy and aims of the school. There is no guarantee of a place at the school for any child applying.

When considering which children can be selected for admission, the **Board of Governors will only consider information which is detailed on or attached to the Transfer Application.** Parents should therefore ensure that **all information** pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admission criteria is stated on the Transfer Application or attached to it.

(Please note: the Sacred Heart Grammar School has been directed by regulations to select for admission all children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission before any child not so resident may be selected for admission.)

Special Circumstances

Just before or during the Entrance Assessment, a child might experience medical or other problems which affect his/her performance in the Entrance Assessment and these difficulties are referred to as Special Circumstances. When this child applies for a place in a school which is using academic selection, his/her parents can provide appropriate evidence to the Board of Governors to show that their child had experienced Special Circumstances and ask that the outcome achieved in the Entrance Assessment should be adjusted.

Girls will be admitted using our admissions criteria according to the result achieved in the SEAG Entrance Assessment, subject only to the consideration of **medical or other problems** which may have affected their performance in the Entrance Assessment and which are supported by **verified documentary evidence** of a medical or other appropriate nature.

Recognition or acceptance of a claim for Special Circumstances can only go some way to assist the child affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may have influenced her performance in the Entrance Assessment.

The admissions sub-committee in the subject school will assess each claim for Special Circumstances and take a decision on whether Special Circumstances apply and then whether to adjust the grade/score achieved in the Entrance Assessment. This process is carried out before any decisions are taken on the children to be selected for admission.

For parents wishing to make a claim for special circumstances, a pack containing the **Special Circumstances Form** and **A Guide for Parents & Guardians Claiming Special Circumstances**, can be downloaded from the school's website.

If a claim for the consideration of Special Circumstances is made in respect of matters for which Access Arrangements were granted or could have been granted, had they been known to the Assessment Centre, the Board of Governors may take into account the fact that the child was granted Access Arrangements or could have been granted Access Arrangements.

The completed claim for Special Circumstances must be uploaded with the online Transfer Application by 12 noon (GMT) on Thursday 20th February 2025. At this time, the claim for Special Circumstances, supported by the required documentary evidence using Form SC must be uploaded along with the appropriate independent documentation to the online Transfer Application. Gathering and submitting the documentary evidence as described above is vital for the consideration of a claim for Special Circumstances.

Details of Medical or Other Problems

Where it is claimed that a child's performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessment(s) has been affected by a medical or other problem, independent evidence of its existence must be provided to the school. Where the problem is a medical one of short-term duration which affected the child only at the time of the SEAG Entrance Assessment(s), the school will require the production of evidence that the child was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time of the Entrance Assessment and the result of that examination. Similarly, if the medical problem is other than of short-term duration, the school will require the production of evidence from a medical practitioner who treated the child and which explains the condition and how it could have affected the child in the SEAG Entrance Assessment(s). Where the problem is of a non-medical nature, the parents must set out the precise details of the problem and append to the Transfer Application all appropriate independent documentary evidence which corroborates its existence. The name of the Assessment Centre at which the child sat the SEAG Entrance Assessment(s) must also be included. Please refer to **A Guide for Parents & Guardians Claiming Special Circumstances**, which can be downloaded from the school's website.

Educational Evidence

All claims for Special Circumstances must include objective and relevant educational evidence to show that the medical or other problem experienced by your child at or around the time of the SEAG Entrance Assessment(s) caused her to underachieve. This educational evidence must be provided by the parent/guardian of the child and verified by the primary school Principal. The evidence should be sufficient to enable the Board of Governors to reach a decision on any adjustment to the grade/score achieved by the child in the Entrance Assessment. This evidence should include all the results from the child's school administered standardised tests in English/Literacy and Mathematics/Numeracy taken from the beginning of the Key Stage 2 period and should be provided on the Form SC.

It is emphasised that the onus is on the parent/guardian to ensure that all the above information is verified and provided by the primary school to the parent/guardian under the Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 and under the Data Protection Act (2018). Failure by the parent/guardian to provide such verified information will result in the Board of Governors being unable to consider the application for Special Circumstances. Material referred to above will assist the subcommittee in making its judgement: it is however, not intended to be restrictive and the subcommittee will consider any and all material attached to the Transfer Application. It should be noted by parent(s)/guardian(s) that such considerations involve an exercise in judgement and not precise calculation.

Special Provision

For parents wishing to make a claim for Special Provision, a pack containing the **SP Form** and '**Claiming Special Provisions: A Guide for Parents & Guardians**', can be downloaded from the school's website. Parents/guardians should carefully read this guidance before completing **Form SP**.

Special Provision can be made by the Board of Governors for girls who:

- i. have received more than half of their education outside Northern Ireland; or
- ii. wish to transfer to a post-primary school that uses the SEAG Entrance Assessment from a school outside Northern Ireland; or
- iii. due to a serious medical or other problem, which is 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.

Those children to whom clause (i) or (ii) (above) applies may, if their parents/guardians wish, sit the SEAG Entrance Assessments in which case the result obtained would also be considered.

The Board of Governors will decide whether these girls should be admitted on the basis that they fall within the ability range of other girls being admitted in that year and/or meet one or more of the Admissions Criteria 1 to 8 as listed below.

The Board of Governors may require an assessment of the student's abilities to be carried out by a suitably qualified person or body approved by the school.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that information relating to Special Provision, or indeed information regarding the existence of any other relevant factor(s), is given on or appended to the child's Transfer Application as described in the guidance documentation. It should be noted by parent(s)/guardian(s) that such considerations involve an exercise in judgement and not precise calculation.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Application Deadline

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on the 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 the 20th February 2025 and up to 4pm on the 25th February 2025 will be treated as a late application.

The results achieved by girls in the Entrance Assessment provided by SEAG and administered by the Assessment Centres on Saturday 16th November 2024 and Saturday 23rd of November 2024 will form the primary evidence to be considered by the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors will admit girls strictly on the following basis:

1. Girls placed in Band 1 in the SEAG Entrance Assessments and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls placed in Band 1.
2. Girls placed in Band 2 in the SEAG Entrance Assessments and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls placed in Band 2.
3. Girls placed in Band 3 in the SEAG Entrance Assessments and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls placed in Band 3.
4. Girls placed in Band 4 in the SEAG Entrance Assessments and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision have been accepted and who, in the opinion

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of the authorised Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls placed in Band 4.

5. Girls placed in Band 5 in the SEAG Entrance Assessments and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls placed in Band 5.
6. Girls placed in Band 6 in the SEAG Entrance Assessments and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls placed in Band 6.
7. All other girls who have applied to be admitted to Sacred Heart Grammar School.
8. If there are more girls who satisfy any one of the criteria 1 to 7 when they are applied in the order of priority set down above than places remaining, then girls will be selected according to the following sub-criteria applied in the order set down below: -
 - (i) Girls who, at the date of their application, have another girl of the family (as defined by DE in Transfer 2010 Guidance) attending the school or having been selected for admission to the school in the coming school year. The DE define sibling as follows:

“Children who, at the date of application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the school”. Applicants must state the name, date of birth and registration group of the child attending the school on the online Transfer Application.
 - (ii) Girls who, at the date of their application, have a parent/guardian who is a member of the permanent teaching, administrative, or ancillary staff of the Sacred Heart Grammar School.

Applicants must state the names of the member of staff and the nature of the relationship (Mother, father, guardian etc.) on the online transfer application.
 - (iii) Girls who, at the date of their application, are the eldest (as defined by THE PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFER FROM PRIMARY TO POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION Circular Number: 2024/18) girl of the family to be eligible to apply for admission to the school. This wording covers “only” girls and is also intended to treat twins (or other multiples) as joint eldest.

Proof of the eldest girl must be uploaded with the online transfer application: This proof should take the form of a letter stating that the girl is the eldest child eligible and that the family is known to the verifier. The letter should come from one of the following who is not a family member:

 - A Primary School Principal
 - A Member of the Clergy
 - A Solicitor
 - An Elected public representative
 - A Police Officer
 - (iv) Tie Breaker Criteria outlined as follows:

If there are more applicants who satisfy any one of the Sub Criteria (i)-(iii) when they are being applied in the order of priority as set down above than there are places available, applicants within that sub-criterion will be ranked for acceptance on the basis of a computer-based process which will make use of the full names of applicants, exactly as shown on their Transfer Application.

The process is carried out by means of a computer program which, for each applicant, generates a ranking number using the full names of applicants exactly as shown on their Transfer Application, as the seed for a random number generator.

The random numbers generated are ranked lowest to highest and priority given to the applicant with the lowest number. Places will be allocated in order from lowest random number to highest.

The outcome, for any given applicant, is dependent only on the full names of applicants exactly as shown on their Transfer Application and is not affected by the details of any other applicant. Although the process is repeatable, and the results may therefore be subsequently verified, it is not possible to predict, in advance of running the program, what the result will be for any given set of details. Applicants with the lowest ranking numbers will be given places up to the number of places available. This will be witnessed by the principal and one other member of the school's

admission sub-committee.

Twins and children of other multiple births

Where twins and other children of multiple births are participants in the computer based process of determining rank order as described above, the procedure will be conducted as set out but, on completion of the computer process, the ranking number of the second and any subsequent girl of the multiple birth will be changed to that number immediately after the ranking number of the first girl and the ranking number of all other applicants whose ranking number is higher than that of the second girl will be changed accordingly as a result.

Verification of all Information

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on the Transfer Application or appended to the Transfer Application by parents/guardians. For verification purposes original documents are required and not facsimiles or photocopies.

The provision of false or incorrect information or the failure to provide any requested verifying documents within the deadline set by the Sacred Heart Grammar School will result in either the withdrawal of a place or the inability of the school to offer a place.

The responsibility to ensure that:

- **The Transfer Application and other necessary documentation is correctly completed.**
- **Any Special Circumstances/Special Provision being claimed are properly documented as described in detail above and in the guidance documentation; and**
- **Any required verification documents are provided within specified deadlines,**

lies with the parents/guardians of the child. Failure to ensure that this occurs will lead to any request for Special Circumstances/Special Provision not being considered and/or the application not being considered by the Board of Governors and/or the withdrawal of a place in the school.

YEAR 8 ADMISSIONS AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

Should a place in Year 8 become available place(s) will be offered to those whose applications were considered by the Admissions Subcommittee and who were not admitted. All such unsuccessful applicants will have been awarded a Rank Order determined by the published criteria; should a place in Year 8 become available, it will be offered to the pupil placed first in that Rank Order. This Rank Order forms the waiting list and students will be admitted into Year 8 in this order when a place becomes available. This waiting list will cease to operate after the 30th June 2026 and the files will be destroyed according to the School's Disposal Schedule.

In examining all such applications, the Governors will consider carefully if the applicant is of a standard equivalent to that of other students with whom she will be taught at the school, or if her admission to Sacred Heart Grammar School would be detrimental to her educational interests or would be prejudicial to the efficient use of resources.

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO YEAR 8

| Year | Admissions No | Total Applications All Preferences | Total Admissions |
|---------|---------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 2022/23 | 120 | 222 | 161* |
| 2023/24 | 120 | 131 | 120 |
| 2024/25 | 120 | 126 | 121* |

*Includes appeals, SEN Provision or temporary variation as directed by DE.

ADMISSIONS TO YEARS 9, 10, 11 AND 12

The Board of Governors delegates the admission of pupils other than year 8 to the school principal.

Admission to years 9-12

The following criteria will be applied to applicants for admission to years 9-12 in the following order:

1. There must be an available place in the required year within the school's approved enrolment number.
2. They must produce academic evidence which confirms their suitability for grammar school, for example but

not limited to, the grade achieved in the SEAG Entrance Exam, marks from school tests in their present school, evidence of their ranking within their present class, evidence of their grades in any public examination taken in the previous two years.

3. If a student has not taken the transfer test, they must produce detailed academic evidence which will enable the subcommittee to allocate a grade.
4. Satisfactory references from their school principal confirming the students' willingness to co-operate with school procedures and discipline.
5. Two recent, satisfactory school reports.
6. Those students who satisfy the above requirements will then be ranked according to the criteria used for the admission of students to Year 8.

In dealing with all such applications the Governors will consider carefully if the admission of the student would prejudice the efficient use of resources, or if the student is not of a standard equivalent to that of the students with whom she would be taught.

Any applications for a place in years 9-12 will be kept on file until the end of the academic year at which point this waiting list will cease operate and the files will be destroyed according to the School's Disposal Schedule.

APPLICATION TO YEAR 13

The Board of Governors delegates the admission of pupils to Year 13 to the principal.

Applications & Admissions Criteria (Sacred Heart Grammar School Students/Internal Applicants)

Parents/guardians and students should note that all Sacred Heart Grammar School students who meet all the following criteria will **automatically have the right to a place in the Year 13**, regardless of the grades of outside applicants to the school.

Consideration will be given to applicants who meet the following requirements:

- (i) Have achieved a minimum of four B and four C grades in GCSE subjects (full course).
- (ii) All students will take at least 3 subjects to A-level.
- (iii) For students wishing to study 4 subjects to A-Level, further criteria to establish suitability, will be applied on a case-by-case basis.
- (iv) It is recommended that students will need to have achieved at least a Grade B in those subjects they wish to study at advanced level.
- (v) In subjects for which GCSE in the subject is not a prerequisite, further criteria to establish suitability, will be applied on a case-by-case basis.
- (vi) Availability of places in particular subjects.
- (vii) Agreement from the Principal confirming the applicant's suitability regarding attitude to study, willingness to co-operate with school procedures, behaviour and attendance record.

In the case of Sacred Heart Grammar School students whose performance in GCSE examinations may have been detrimentally affected by significant medical or other problems, the principal is empowered, in exceptional cases, to waive the requirements of the criteria above. The onus is on the parents of the child to provide all medical or other evidence in a timely manner to allow the principal and as necessary the Board of Governors to review it thoroughly. Information pertaining to performance on the day of the examination must be provided prior to the publication of results.

Applications & Admissions Criteria (External Applicants)

If suitable places are available in Year 13, and subject to enrolment numbers, consideration will be given to applicants from other schools who meet the following requirements:

- (i) Have achieved a minimum of four B and four C grades in GCSE subjects (full course).
- (ii) All students will take at least 3 subjects to A-level.
- (iii) For students wishing to study 4 subjects to A-Level, further criteria to establish suitability, will be applied on a case-by-case basis.

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- (iv) It is recommended that students will need to have achieved at least a Grade B in those subjects they wish to study at advanced level.
- (v) In subjects for which GCSE in the subject is not a prerequisite, further criteria to establish suitability, will be applied on a case-by-case basis.
- (vi) Availability of places in particular subjects.
- (vii) Agreement from the Principal confirming the applicant's suitability regarding attitude to study, willingness to co-operate with school procedures, behaviour and attendance record. In the case of a number of applicants meeting the above criteria the normal entry criteria for admission into year 8 will be applied to determine who will be offered places.

In examining all such applications, the Governors will consider carefully if the applicant is of a standard equivalent to that of other students with whom she will be taught at the school, or if her admission to Sacred Heart Grammar School would be detrimental to her educational interests or would be prejudicial to the efficient use of resources.