



# GONZAGA COLLEGE SJ

## Admissions Policy

**This Admissions Policy is prepared as part of the School Plan under Section 21 of the Education Act 1998.**

### The College

Gonzaga College is an all-boys private school founded in 1950 situated at Sandford Road, Dublin 6.

Gonzaga is a Catholic school which admits boys who are baptised and practicing Catholics. It is a Jesuit school which aims to be a community of growth, service and faith, in which young people are able to develop the full range of their talents and abilities in a balanced and integrated way. The Jesuit motto *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* summarises the overall ethos of the school which operates in the context of the *Characteristics of Jesuit Education*.

A central concern of the school is quality teaching and learning. Gonzaga enjoys a justified reputation as a centre of academic excellence and in promoting this we aspire to teach in accord with individual learning aptitude. We aim to promote qualities of critical thinking, interior knowledge (*sentir*) and capacity for reflection in our pupils.

Based on our conviction that human fulfilment is to be found through faith in Jesus Christ and in service of the world in imitation of Him, we seek to form pupils of competence, conscience and compassion who will strive to give Christian leadership through the quality of their lives and their commitment to work for a more just, cohesive and caring society.

### Mission

Founded as a Catholic School in 1950 Gonzaga College continues a tradition of education in accordance with the *Characteristics of Jesuit Education* under the Trusteeship of the Society of Jesus.

In Jesuit education the criterion of excellence is applied to all areas of school life and therefore our mission is the fullest possible development of every dimension of the person.

In particular we seek to foster a sense of values and a commitment to the service of others. Thus we pledge ourselves to an ever renewed faith which actively promotes the struggle for greater justice in the world.

This leads to the following objectives:

1. Gonzaga will aim to develop a school community which is based on respect, love and service.
2. In the pursuit of excellence the educational process will be collaborative and reflective with openness to growth.
3. An understanding of the Gospel and its implications for action will be an integral part of the education offered to students at Gonzaga.

### Parents and Pupils

Because of its nature as a Catholic, Jesuit school Gonzaga expects that parents and pupils will accept and support the ethos of the school in a positive and active manner.

### Pupils:

To this end all pupils are expected to participate positively in the classroom and in the co-curricular and religious activities proposed by the College. These include retreats, liturgies, prayer groups, outreach and faith formation programmes.

### Parents:

The College needs the fullest cooperation of parents and envisages attendance at parent-teacher meetings, information meetings and other events. Parents are also invited to participate in the Parent Fora. The College welcomes the support and contribution of the Parents' Association and Council.

The acceptance of a place in Gonzaga implies the agreement of parents and pupils to fulfil the expectations expressed in these paragraphs.

### Finance

Gonzaga is a fee-paying school and the finances of the school are provided by fees and by contributions from the Irish Jesuit Province.

### Staffing:

The DES provides the salaries of a number of teachers determined by a pupil-teacher ratio of 18:1. In the academic year 2008-2009 the DES funds 30 teaching posts based on this ratio and 3 *ex quota* posts (Principal, Deputy Principal and Guidance Counsellor). In the year 2008-2009 the College is funding a further 9 teaching posts as well as a Director of Finance, Administrator, School Secretary, IT Manager, Librarian, Gamesmaster, Caretaker, Grounds-man and cleaning and security staff.

### Assisted places:

An assisted places scheme is funded jointly by the College and the Jesuit Province. It is the intention of this scheme that **no pupil should be refused enrolment in Gonzaga College because of an inability to pay fees.** This is not a scholarship scheme

### Development Programme:

The Board of Management also operates a Development Programme to improve facilities on the campus.

The first phase of the plan began in 1995 and has now run its course. This phase cost €4.4 million in construction, fees and interest charges. This money was raised privately through the generosity of parents, past pupils and the Irish Jesuits. A further phase of development began in 2007 and is due for completion in July 2009. All incoming parents are invited to participate in the programme.

Information concerning fees and other expenses will be provided at the Information Evening (see below) as part of the ordinary Application Process.

### Management

The Board of Management consists of eight members appointed by the Jesuit Provincial who is Patron of the school. Of these, two members are nominated by the staff of the school and two by the parents. Since October 2007 the Board members have been.

Fr Noel Barber SJ (Chairperson)

Mr Padraic O'Connor, Mr Mark FitzGerald, Ms Keara McAndrew, Ms Siobhan Keogh, Mr Brian Flannery, Mr Oliver O'Brien, Dr Pat Nolan. The Headmaster Mr Kevin Whirdy acts as Secretary to the Board.

### Admissions

Within the context of current legislation, the DES regulations, the rights of the Patron and the resources available, the College supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation in the school and parental choice.

#### (A) Applications:

Preliminary applications for entry to First Year should reach the College **on or before 1<sup>st</sup> September** in the year before the boy starts secondary school.

It should be noted that, by long-standing custom, there is no communication with the public in advance of the application process. With over 250 applications expected for the incoming First Year group for 2008-2009, it would be inappropriate to directly solicit further interest. This is not to preclude the possibility of future advertising in the media, visits to the main feeder schools, or the hosting of an Open Evening, etc.

There is no waiting list for First Year admission, so it is of no advantage to have applied earlier than other applicants: Gonzaga does not operate a first-come, first-served policy.

**(B) Information Evening:**

The parent(s) / guardian(s) of all applicants are invited to the Information Evening in the College in September (by mail to the last address advised to the College). At this meeting the ethos of the school is outlined and all relevant information is made available to parents.

At this meeting all parents are also provided with a pack containing more detailed final application forms.

These forms request details of the applicant's family, primary schooling and expectations of Gonzaga. Parents are also requested to obtain a confidential reference from the Principal of the applicant's Primary School. (Where Primary School principals are unhappy to provide this reference, the non provision will not prejudice the application)

Final application forms, with any supporting documentation, should be returned as soon as possible but in any event **not later than October 31st** which will be considered as the official date of application in terms of the Education Act.

Applications received after October 31st will not be entertained.

Unsuccessful applicants at this stage will receive notice within 21 days of October 31st.

**(C) Shortlisting**

On the basis of the returned application forms and depending on the number applicants a shortlisting of applicants may take place. Applicants from categories E 3, 4, 5 & 6 (see below) are automatically shortlisted provided they fulfil criteria E1 & 2. In the preparation of this shortlist for other applicants attention is given to the faith background of the family, their commitment to the ideals of Jesuit Education (see appendix 1 for a summary of *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* the ethos document for all Jesuit schools) and the reference from the Primary Principal.

**(D) Interview Process:**

Each short-listed applicant from categories E6 and E7 and his parents/ guardians is interviewed by the Headmaster. The purpose of the interview is to explore further the information provided on the application forms. Ordinarily the process involves a brief interview with the boy. The principal purpose of this interview is to determine that the applicant himself wishes to attend Gonzaga. Then his parents are interviewed at greater length. Applicants from categories E4 and E5 may be interviewed.

Especially important in this interview is evidence of a commitment to the promotion of a faith which issues in justice: that is, that they desire that their son develop his spiritual values and grow in concern for others, and that they are open to such development in themselves. What is being looked for in the words of the late Fr. Pedro Arrupe S.J., former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, are '*men for others*'.

No applicant is discriminated against on the grounds of disability.

**(E) Decision making**

The decisions relating to applications are made by the Headmaster of the school in accordance with the criteria outlined below.

Interviewed applicants will receive notice of the decision within 21 days of completion of the interview process.

Since the number of applicants normally exceeds the number of places available in the ratio of 4:1, the following criteria for decision making will operate (in the order stated):

1. Applicants must be baptised and practicing Catholic boys.
2. Applicants must be resident south of the river Liffey.
3. Brothers of present, or recently past, pupils who will benefit from the curriculum and whose families have enjoyed good relations with the College in the past will receive the greatest priority. These applicants are not interviewed.
4. Sons of members of Gonzaga's teaching staff, and nephews, great-nephews and first cousins (up to one remove) of Jesuits, likewise receive priority. These applicants may be interviewed.

5. Sons and grandsons of Past Pupils are also given priority over other applicants. These applicants may be interviewed.
6. Boys whose families are involved directly in other Jesuit works for a substantial time likewise receive priority. These applicants will be interviewed
7. For the remaining places those who are considered most likely to contribute positively to, and benefit from, the ethos of the school are given priority. These will be applicants who, through their interview and previous records show that they support the ethos of the College articulated in the Mission Statement and the *Characteristics of Jesuit Education*. These candidates are offered such places as are available following interview. Regard will be had in the interview process for candidates with disabilities.
8. If the number of applicants successful at interview (from category 7 above) exceeds the number of places available, random selection, independently witnessed, will apply.
9. It should be noted that receiving priority does not imply that an applicant will automatically receive a place.
10. Applicants who are unsuccessful in this process are invited to apply for inclusion on a waiting list from which any places subsequently arising will be assigned on the basis of random selection. This waiting list ceases to operate after the opening of the College at the start of the new academic year. Those on the waiting list may apply for inclusion on a list which will operate for Second and later years.

Note 1: The interview is a sharing of ideas. It is an opportunity for the boy and his parents to ask about the school. It is also an opportunity for the College to determine which category applies to the application (E4 to E7 above) and clarify issues relating to the ethos and culture of the College. The interview process allows the College, as co-operator with parents in the education of their children, to discuss educational and spiritual issues. Thus the interview aims to explore what shared values exist between the home and the school; to clarify the ethos and culture of the College and to assist in the decision making process. It also considers the motivation of the student to attend the College.

Note 2: Factors relating to catchment area (other than the requirement of E2 above), location of primary school attended or date of application have no bearing on the enrolment process.

Parents have the right to appeal a refusal by a school to enrol a student under Section 29 of the *Education Act (1998)*. The appeal must be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school is notified to the parents.

**(F) Acceptance of places**

Applicants who are being offered places will be invited to confirm in writing acceptance or otherwise within 14 days of the posting of the offer, along with a non-refundable deposit of €500 (to be set against fees for the coming year). Failure to comply with this will result in the offer being withdrawn.

**(G) Admission to other than First Year**

Admissions at other age levels occur only when vacancies arise in the appropriate classes. Such vacancies are rare but a waiting list is maintained for interested candidates. When a vacancy occurs the relevant candidates are notified and interviews are held, usually in the month of June prior to entry. The same criteria which apply to First Year entry will also apply to admission to other years with one exception. First priority is given to pupils of other Jesuit schools worldwide who are now resident in the south Dublin area. No pupil is admitted at this stage without a satisfactory reference from the principal of his current secondary school.

Further information about the College may be obtained from the website [www.gonzaga.ie](http://www.gonzaga.ie)

**June 2008 (This policy is revised annually)**

**A M D G**