

**Policy for admission to, and continuing in,
Rockbrook Park School**

“Since parents have conferred life on their children they have the gravest obligation to educate their children. Hence parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. This role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. It is therefore the duty of parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and reverence for God and for others which will promote an integrated, personal and social education of their children. Hence the family is the first school of the social virtues which every society needs.” (Vatican II Declaration on Christian Education No. 3).

First principles: Rockbrook as a family school

- Rockbrook Park School is a secondary school for the education of boys. It is committed to helping parents (or guardians), in their wonderful task of educating their children. The conviction that parents are the first educators of children is central to the school’s philosophy of education. The home is the child’s first school, and the formal school organisation should be seen, in many respects, as an extension of the family.
- The school and family should therefore share a vision about the kind of adult they would like their son to become. They should also agree how this vision can be made a reality through the complementary educational roles of family and school, working in close collaboration.
- Rockbrook commits itself, in partnership with the parents, to help each student develop his potential to the full and to strive for personal and academic excellence commensurate with his talents.
- Parents and school should respect each other’s complementary roles. Parents retain the primary responsibility for the education of their son. At the same time parents should respect the due autonomy and professional expertise of the school: this independent professionalism is an important aspect of what parents seek when they request the enrolment of their son in the school.

Rationale for this policy statement:

- 1) to help parents understand the importance of their sharing in the school’s philosophy of education;
- 2) to specify what is needed to allow the school to deliver on its commitment to help each enrolled boy strive for personal and academic excellence;
- 3) specifically, to help the school decide whether or not to admit a boy to the school, and once admitted, whether or not he should be permitted to continue in the school.

Goals (objectives) of this policy document

The practical objectives of this policy document are to clarify for parents, students, school management and staff how the school ethos applies, in practice, to the issues of enrolment and continuing in the school.

Criteria for admission

Rockbrook Park School is a secondary school for boys only. Within the general criteria for all students in the school, boys are accepted in Rockbrook regardless of social class, creed or race, provided the family (parents/guardians) understand and support the ethos of the school and its educational philosophy. To be eligible for admission to the school a boy must have reached 12 years of age on 1st January in the calendar year following the boy's entry into the school.

- 1) In enrolling students, priority is given to
 - a) boys who have a brother in the school or a sister in Rosemont
 - b) children of past pupils
 - c) boys from families in the immediate neighbourhood
- 2) Each boy must have the academic ability and temperament to benefit sufficiently from the educational programme offered by the school.
- 3) As the school aims to educate the whole person, each boy should also have the age-appropriate desire and willingness to grow in character and virtue.
- 4) The final decision on the student's suitability is made by the school management, in consultation with the relevant parties.

Stages prior to enrolment

1. Parents attend an "Information Day" about the school to learn about the ethos and educational philosophy and services of the school before deciding if they wish to proceed.
2. Their son then attends an "Introduction Day", to allow the student to learn more about the school and to allow school staff to make an assessment of his suitability. This assessment is made on his capacity to contribute to the environment of freedom and learning which the school seeks to create. This assessment assumes greater significance for boys wishing to enter the school at older ages than normal first year entry.
3. Assuming the parents and school then wish to proceed, a meeting is arranged between parents and Principal, or Deputy Principal or other staff member appointed by the Principal. This meeting allows the parties to get to know each other and to ensure they are agreed on the important points.
4. As part of the admission procedure, parents are required to provide full information on the educational needs of their son.
5. The school then offers (or declines to offer) the parents a place for their son in writing. If the school's decision is not to offer a place, an explanation will be given.
6. The parents accept the enrolment offer in writing within a specified period and secure the place by paying a non-refundable booking deposit.

Note: The school operates a scholarship scheme which is promoted independently from the admissions procedure.

For a boy to remain in the school

Once accepted, the school commits itself to make every reasonable effort to provide a complete secondary education for the student and to help him grow in virtue, in an active collaboration with his parents. This commitment however must naturally be (to some

extent) conditional on the behaviour of the other parties involved (within the give-and-take of any human relationship). In particular:

1. The student must continue to show the minimum ability and motivation needed to benefit from the courses being offered.
2. The student should continue to make a serious effort, appropriate to his age, for example, to do his work well, without interrupting others, or frequently disrupting classes, or giving serious bad example.
3. The student should also “fit in” with the school atmosphere and contribute to the school community, making a reasonable effort to grow in maturity and to develop the basic virtues promoted by the teachers, tutors, staff and families.
4. As the school day is a small proportion of the student's life, the atmosphere in which he spends his home and leisure time is a factor in assessing the boy's capacity to participate and thrive in the school's educational environment. In particular, serious misbehaviour outside the school is also of direct concern to school management, because of its many repercussions within the school.
5. Parents should be willing to cooperate actively with the school in addressing practical issues relating to their son as they arise, in a spirit of honesty, patience and goodwill, with a willingness to listen to professional advice.

Every attempt will be made to address individual student issues, over time, in a spirit of close cooperation between parents and school. The final judgement of the student's suitability to continue in the school, however, rests with the school management, in consultation with the relevant parties.

The school management must refer a decision on the long term suspension of a student to the Board of Management, and parents have the right to appeal such a decision to the Board.

Responsibility for defining, developing and implementing this policy rests with

- a) The Board of Management of the school (for final decisions on policy)
- b) Principal & Deputy Principal (as primary executors of this policy)
- c) All school employees (for policy development and implementation as appropriate)

The effectiveness of the policy will be reviewed annually (revision overdue, but awaiting DES national proposals).

The appropriateness of this policy will be judged primarily on the results seen in the maturity and responsibility of the pupils and in their academic performance.

Proposed changes to this policy should be referred to the Board of Management for approval.