

OUR LADY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Convent of Mercy

Chequer Hill

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Principal: Mrs Fiona McAlinden BSc (Hons), PGCE, MEd, PQH(NI)

Chairperson of the Board of Governors: Ms Catherine Magee

**Voluntary Grammar
Girls**

Age Range: 11-18

Admissions Number: 120

Enrolment Number: 860

OPEN EVENING INFORMATION

Date for Parents' Evening: Thursday 4th December 2025

To Parents/Guardians naming Our Lady's Grammar School as a Preference on your child's Transfer Application

Entrance Test Results

In assessing academic ability Our Lady's Grammar School intends to use the result awarded to pupils completing the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG) Entrance Assessment on Saturday 15 & Saturday 22 November 2025. Parents/guardians must upload a copy of the result slip which they receive on Saturday 24 January 2026 with the online Transfer Application and the band should also be entered on the Transfer Application.

Special Circumstances

Special Circumstances usually refers to the claim that as a result of medical or other problems an applicant's performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessment was affected. Any parents/guardians claiming Special Circumstances must complete **Form SC** available from Our Lady's Grammar School or from its website. This form, together with the independent, verifiable documentary evidence which corroborates the Special Circumstances claim, must be uploaded with the online Transfer Application and include the **Form SC** no later than 12 noon (GMT) on Thursday 19 February 2026.

Special Provisions

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 online Transfer Application no later than 12 noon (GMT) on Thursday 19 February 2026. **Form SP** is available from the school or its website. Parents/guardians wishing to claim Special Provisions should also forward a copy of **Form SP** directly to Our Lady's Grammar School by no later than 12 noon (GMT) on Thursday 19 February 2026.

Further details can be found in the sections 'Note on Special Circumstances' and 'Note on Special Provisions' below.

School Fee: £75 per annum

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

The Board of Governors has determined the Admissions Criteria to be used and has delegated to the Admissions Sub-Committee, of which the Principal is a member, the functions and responsibilities in the application of the Admissions Criteria set out herein. The criteria are reviewed annually in light of any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2026-2027

Our Lady's Grammar School, Newry, is a Catholic grammar school for girls. This school wishes to accept girls who will benefit from the education it offers and whose parents/guardians are in agreement with the philosophy and aims of the school.

When considering which children can be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is included on or submitted with the online Transfer Application. All relevant information that might qualify a pupil for a school's published admissions criteria must be included. **It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that this information is provided and that it is both complete and accurate before submitting with the online Transfer Application.** Examples of such information include whether the child has a child of the family (state name of the child of the family as defined by DE in Circular 2025/12) at the school or whether the child is registered with the Education Authority as being entitled to Free School Meals.

(Please note: In accordance with the 1997 Education Northern Ireland Order (Section 16 (4)), Our Lady's Grammar School has been directed 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

Girls will be admitted strictly as described below 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 SEAG Entrance Assessment and which are supported by independent, verifiable documentary evidence of a medical or other appropriate nature. These medical or other problems are commonly referred to as **Special Circumstances** and are described in the **Claiming Special Circumstances - A Guide for Parents & Guardians** document which is available from our school or its website. Parents/guardians should carefully read this guidance before completing **Form SC**.

If a claim for 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 19 February 2026. 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 has been affected by a medical or other problem, independent, verifiable documentary 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, 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 SEAG Entrance Assessment and the result of that examination. If the medical problem is other than that of a short duration, a doctor must provide a letter on headed notepaper which explains the medical condition and how it could have affected the child in the Entrance Assessment. Where the problem is of a non-medical nature, the parent/guardian must set out the precise details of the problem and submit with the online Transfer Application all appropriate independent, verifiable documentary evidence which corroborates its existence. The name of the Assessment Centre at which the child sat the SEAG Entrance Assessment must also be included. Please refer to the **Claiming Special Circumstances - A Guide for Parents & Guardians** document available from our school or website.

EDUCATIONAL EVIDENCE

All claims for Special Circumstances must include objective and relevant standardised educational evidence to show that the medical or other problem experienced by your child at or around the time of the SEAG Entrance Assessment 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 band/score achieved by the child in the SEAG Entrance Assessment. This evidence should include all of 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 **Form SC**. Any supporting letter from the primary school Principal must include objective and relevant standardised educational evidence.

It is emphasised that the onus is on the parent/guardian to ensure that all of 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 as amended 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 Admissions Subcommittee in making its judgement: it is however, not intended to be restrictive and the Admissions Subcommittee will consider any and all material uploaded with the online Transfer Application. It should be noted by parents/guardians that such considerations involve an exercise in judgement and not precise calculation.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS

An applicant may request Special Provisions, where the candidate:

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 2019) to the 28th February 2026 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 serious medical or other problems which are supported by appropriate documentary evidence or for a demonstrably valid reason also 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.

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 Admissions Criteria 1 to 8 (i) - (iii) as listed below. The Board of Governors may require an assessment of the pupil's abilities to be carried out by a suitably qualified person or body approved by the school.

Parents/guardians may provide additional appropriate educational evidence which should include the results of standardised testing carried out during Key Stage 2 or its equivalent period in any primary school. This will be considered by the Board of Governors along with the standardised evidence described above in exercising their educational judgement in these matters. The onus lies with the parents/guardians to provide this standardised educational evidence and to have it appropriately verified.

Those children to whom clause 1 or 2 (above) applies may, if their parents/guardians wish, sit the SEAG Entrance Assessment in which case the result obtained would also be considered.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that information relating to Special Provisions, or indeed information regarding the existence of any other relevant factor(s), is submitted with the child's online Transfer Application 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 2026 – 2027

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 27 January 2026 at 12 noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 12 noon (GMT) on Thursday 19 February 2026. (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12 noon (GMT) on 19 February 2026 and up to 4pm on 24 February 2026 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 15 November and 22 November 2025 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 awarded Band 1 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Admissions Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls awarded Band 1.
2. Girls awarded Band 2 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Admissions Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls awarded Band 2.
3. Girls awarded Band 3 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Admissions Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls awarded Band 3.

4. Girls awarded Band 4 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Admissions Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls awarded Band 4.
5. Girls awarded Band 5 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Admissions Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls awarded Band 5.
6. Girls awarded Band 6 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and those girls regarding whom parental claims for consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions have been accepted and who, in the opinion of the authorised Admissions Subcommittee, based on the documented evidence submitted as required, are of comparable ability to those girls awarded Band 6.
7. All other girls who have applied to be admitted to Our Lady's Grammar School.

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 criteria applied in the order set down below: -

8.
 - (i) Girls who, at the date of their online application, have a parent/guardian who is a member of the permanent teaching, administrative, or ancillary staff of Our Lady's 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.
 - (ii) Girls who, at the date of their application, have another child of the family (as defined by DE in DE Circular 2025/12) enrolled at Our Lady's Grammar School or selected for admission to the school in the coming school year.
Applicants must state the name, date of birth and registration group of the child attending the school on the online transfer application.
 - (iii) Girls who, at the date of their application, are registered with the Education Authority as being entitled to Free School Meals Provision (as defined by DE in Circular 2025/12). Priority to be given so that the proportion of such children admitted is not less than the proportion of FSME applications received within the total number of applications received. The calculation of this proportion will be based on the first preference applications received by the school and the proportion will be applied in the manner set out in DE Circular 2025/12. If the number of applications from girls entitled to Free School Meals is greater than the calculated proportion above, then selection for all places remaining in this category will be on the basis of the computer-based process detailed below under 'Tie-breaker.'
Applicants' registrations for Free School Meals will be verified by the Education Authority.

If there are more girls who meet one of the above sub-criteria when they are applied in the order of priority set down than there are places available, then the remaining sub-criteria will become sub sub-criteria and applied successively in the order set out until the final selection is completed.

Tie-breaker.

Should there be over-subscription amongst girls once the above sub-criteria have been applied, selection for all places remaining, will be on the basis of a computer-based process which will make use of their names as entered on the online Transfer Application. The process is carried out by means of a computer programme which, for each applicant, generates a ranking number using the details from the online Transfer Application as the seed for a random number generator. The outcome, for any given applicant, is dependent only on the applicant's name (as entered on the online 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 programme, 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.

Where, after this process has been applied, two or more applicants have identical ranking numbers and thereby qualify for the last available place(s), places will be allocated by random selection.

Twins and children of other multiple births

Where, in the event of having to use the tie breaker in the process of determining rank order for twins and other children of multiple births, the procedure will be conducted as set out above but, on completion, 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 was lower than that of the first 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 submitted with the Transfer Application by parents/guardians.

The provision of false or incorrect information or the failure to provide any requested verifying documents within the deadline set by Our Lady's 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 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 the application not being considered by the Board of Governors and/or the withdrawal of a place in the school.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO YEAR 8 AFTER THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

Should any place in Year 8 become available for any reason after the start of the school year, these 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 if and when a place becomes available. This waiting list will cease to operate after the 1st September of each academic year.

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO YEAR 8

Year	Admissions Number	Total Applications	Total Admissions
2023/24	120	137	121*
2024/25	120	106	106
2025/26**	120	128	123*

*includes Appeals and Temporary Variations.

****The Total Admissions for year 2026/2027 includes all Year 8 children admitted to the school including those who have a statement of special educational needs and/or may be attending SPiMS.**

(SPiMS = Specialist Provision in Mainstream School)

ADMISSIONS POLICY TO YEARS 9 to 14

The Board of Governors delegates the admission of pupils other than to Year 8 to the School Principal.

CRITERIA FOR TRANSFER BETWEEN SCHOOLS 2026/2027

(Admission to Years 9, 10, 11 and 12)

It is not school policy to admit pupils to year 12, except in exceptional circumstances. Should a place in Years 9, 10 or 11 become available, for any reason, then the Admissions Criteria will apply as for Admissions into Year 8 with Special Provisions for those who have moved from elsewhere to the local area. *(All such applicants for a place must provide evidence from their former school that they have a good academic, disciplinary and attendance record).*

Note:

The Board of Governors reserves the right to refuse an application for a place in Years 9, 10 or 11 even if a place becomes available, if the Board is of the opinion that the admission of the child would prejudice the efficient use of resources.

