

Admission Policy of Ballyheada NS

School Address: Skehanagh, Ballinhassig, Co. Cork T12KT99

Roll number: 15550T

School Patron: Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Ballyheada NS admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Ballyheada National School is a Roman Catholic co-educational primary school recognised by the Department of Education and Science under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. In Ballyheada NS we strive to make our school a place of education and development, where each child is cherished and encouraged to reach his/her full potential.

As a Roman Catholic School, Ballyheada National School aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all pupils cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The school caters for the full range of classes from Junior Infants to Sixth class. It is an inclusive school and caters for children of all abilities. There are 8 full time

teachers, including the principal and special education teacher, employed in the school. Special Needs Assistants are assigned to the school by the Department of Education and Skills to enable the inclusion of children with special educational needs.

Ballyheada NS operates under the Rules for National Schools and Departmental Circulars and is funded by grants. Staff are resourced by the Department of Education and Science. The school is subject to The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) equality law and all other relevant legislation. Ballyheada NS follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

3. Admission Statement

Ballyheada NS will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student / applicant in respect of student concerned
- (b) the civil status ground of the student/applicant in respect of student concerned
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned
- (e) the religion ground of the student / applicant in respect of student concerned
- (f) the disability ground of the student /applicant in respect of student concerned
- (g) the ground of race of the student / applicant in respect of student concerned
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Ballyheada NS is a school whose objective it is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values (Roman Catholic) and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school in accordance with section 7A of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Ballyheada NS is a school which will be establishing a Special Class for Autism in Sept. 2023 with the approval of the Minister for Education, (providing the resources necessary for its establishment are provided by the Dept. of Education. This class provides an education exclusively for students with complex educational needs arising out of a diagnosis of Autism, as specified by the minister.

Ballyheada NS may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

Ballyheada NS will co-operate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

Ballyheada NS will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

Ballyheada NS embraces the philosophy of inclusiveness and endeavours to reflect that philosophy in the admission of pupils with disabilities or other special educational needs. The school welcomes applications from children with special educational needs. Such applications will be processed in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

- Pupils with special educational needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
- In order to assist the school in establishing the educational and physical needs of a successful applicant, relevant to his/her ability or special needs, and to profile the support services required the school requests that parent(s) of the pupils accepted for enrolment;
 - (i) Inform the school of any special needs as early as possible and
 - (ii) Ensure that copies of relevant multidisciplinary professional reports are provided so that provision can be made for that applicant's welfare and educational progress.
- Where the Board of Management deems that further resources are required, it will request the DES and or NCSE and or HSE to provide resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the medical and or psychological report(s).
- The Principal may, meet with the parent(s) of the child to discuss the child's needs. If deemed necessary by the principal the meeting will be held in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) and/or the DES Inspector.

Ballyheada NS with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with autism (ASD)

The Board of Management reserves the right to limit the age range in each class to four years from youngest to oldest.

- The application form for admission to Ballyheada NS Special Class for Children with Autism is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it. Both Ballyheada NS. Enrolment Application Form and Ballyheada NS Special Class Enrolment Form for Children with Autism are to be completed when making an application for admission to Ballyheada NS Special Class.

A multidisciplinary report that confirms a diagnosis of ASD (ICD 10) DSM-IV and a recommendation for placement in a special class for children with autism, attached to a mainstream school is to be submitted with the application.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to the child and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the pupil

School with special education class

The special class attached to Ballyheada NS provides an education exclusively for students with autism (ASD) and the school will refuse admission to this class, where the pupil concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

Ballyheada NS is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a pupil, a person, who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

Application Procedure for New Entrants:

New entrants to Junior Infants and children joining throughout the school will be required to complete a general enrolment application form available on the school's website or through the office. Pupils must be 4 years of age before the first day of the school year.

Application Procedure for Special Class:

1. All applications are required to have a diagnosis (by a multidisciplinary team) of Autism using DSM-IV or ICD 10 classification.
2. All applications must be accompanied by a recent assessment/report carried out by a multi disciplinary team recommending the candidate as suitable for special class placement in an ASD class attached to a mainstream primary school.
3. Ballyheada NS Application Form and Ballyheada NS Special Class Application Form for Children with Autism must be completed when making an application for admission to Ballyheada NS Special Class.
4. Ballyheada NS will cater for children with Autism whose cognitive functioning has been assessed in the average to mild general learning disability as stated in their report.

An application will not be treated as being complete until all requested information has been submitted.

The professional report must meet DES requirements for the particular disability in question.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

1. Pupils already enrolled in Ballyheada NS*
2. Priority is given to siblings (including stepsiblings, resident at same address) already attending the school or who have attended in the past.
3. Children of parents who are past pupils and are resident in the parish
Children living within the parish of Ballinhassig
4. Children of school staff.
5. Children from outside the parish – priority to the child whose home address is closest to the school (as measured in a straight line on an OS map)

****This applies to applicants for a place in the special class.***

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

For admission to Junior Infants

If the class is still oversubscribed following the application of the criteria listed above, then places will be allocated on the basis of age, starting with the oldest applicant, until all places are allocated. If, in the event that one place is available and the next two children are twins, both will be offered places.

If, during the process two or more applicants have the same date of birth and are not siblings, then the time of birth will be used, priority to the oldest will be used to fill the remaining places.

For admission to the ASD class

In the scenario where the ASD class is oversubscribed, in the event of a tie, the Board will then determine the access to the final place/s by proximity to the school, priority given to the closest to the school as measured by a straight line on an ordinance survey map.

7. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7) (e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; with the exception of siblings and parents/grandparents having attended the school (see selection criteria)
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of Ballyheada NS

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Ballyheada NS will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see [section 15](#) below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and [section 16](#) below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see [section 18](#) below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Ballyheada NS, you must indicate—

(i) Whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) Whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by Ballyheada NS where—

- (i) It is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) An applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) An applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in [section 10](#) above.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom -

- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an application for admission was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an offer of admission was made by the school;
- (iii) the date on which an offer of admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Ballyheada NS were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of Ballyheada NS is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

Waiting lists will expire at the end of each school year.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our

school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 13.

15.Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

1. Pupils may be enrolled during the school year if newly resident in the area.
2. Parents seeking to enrol children should return a completed application form with an original birth /adoption certificate to the school. In addition, a baptismal certificate must be forwarded where the child was baptised outside of Ballinhassig parish.
3. Children will be enrolled on application provided that there is space available in the particular class, bearing in mind the class size and enrolment policy and providing the school's Code of Behaviour has been accepted and signed.
4. Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to Ballyheada NS will be sought directly from the previous school.
5. Decisions in relation to enrolment are made by the Board of Management.
6. Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules for National Schools, Education Welfare Act and school's enrolment policy

16.Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The Board of Ballyheada NS or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

Note: Exceptions apply only in relation to fee charging post primary schools, the boarding element in Boarding Schools and admission to post leaving cert or further education courses run by post-primary schools.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where parents/guardians have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

Ballyheada NS is a Catholic school that is welcoming of all faiths and none. However, the ethos of the school is Catholic and is evident throughout the school day. Our current staffing levels and accommodation do not permit us the opportunity to remove children not attending religious instruction from the classroom.

Children not attending religious education will remain in the classroom and complete work provided by their parents or by the class teacher. A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18 Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under sec 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision

by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by Minister under section 29B of Education Act 1998 and are published on website of the Department of Education and Skills. A request for review must be sent to Secretary of Board of Management in writing, in a letter. An email **will not** suffice.

18. Data Protection

The school acknowledges its obligations as a data controller under Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and the EU Data protection Regulation (GDPR). Information obtained for the purposes of allocating places in the school to students will only be used and disclosed in a manner which is compatible with this purpose. Only such personal data as are relevant and necessary for the performance of this function will be retained. The school undertakes to ensure that such information is processed fairly, that it is kept safe, secure, accurate, complete and up to date. A copy of all personal data and kept as part of the admissions process will be made available to the subject of such data on receipt of a written request to the Board of Management.

Policy drafted after consultation with staff and parents in January 2023

This draft was adopted by BOM at a meeting on 17/01/2023.

Signed: 

Date: 17/1/2023

Chairperson BOM