



BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL

**ADMISSIONS AND PARTICIPATION POLICY 2020/21
(FOR APPLICANTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2020)**

KEY INFORMATION – Applications Committee	
School Principal/Designated Liaison Person	Thigam Padayachee
Acting Deputy Principal/Deputy Designated Liaison Person	Wendy Kenny
Chairperson, Board of Management	Patrick Kitterick

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Ballyowen Meadows Special School Admissions and Participation Policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and any provisions of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 as commenced at the date of this policy. The Board of Management/Interim School Manager of Ballyowen Meadows Special School trusts that by so doing parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Ballyowen Meadows Special School,
Loughlinstown Drive,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin.

DES Roll No. 19355s

Phone no. 01 2393010

Email: principal@bmss.ie

Website: www.bmss.ie

Ballyowen Meadows Special School caters for children from 3-12 years with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in the cognitive range of mild or above for whom a special school placement is appropriate. The catchment area includes South Dublin and North Wicklow.

Ballyowen Meadows Special School is a non-denominational, co-educational school under the patronage and the trusteeship of the Health Service Executive (HSE) under the Education Act, 1998. Beechpark Services, Health Service Executive, have up to now provided a range of clinical supports to the school in the form of a multidisciplinary clinical team which combines the expertise from the fields of psychology, speech and language therapy, psychiatry and occupational therapy and social work. This service is in the process of being reviewed by the Health Service Executive and changes may occur during the academic year 2019/20 if Progressing Disability Services are introduced in South Dublin.

The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all pupils, cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual in a therapeutic, nurturing environment. The school's staffing allocation takes account of the fact that our school caters for pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder and possible related special needs. The staffing levels are decided by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and are currently set at a minimum pupil/teacher ratio of 6.1 and two special needs assistants are allocated to each class. Additional staffing resources may be applied for as per the timeframe set out by the NCSE.

The following staff positions are funded by the Department of Education and Skills:

Principal	1
Class teachers	8
Part-time specialist subject teacher	1
Special needs assistants	27.66
School secretary	1
School caretaker	1
Bus Escorts	12

The school operates under the Rules for National Schools and Departmental Circulars. The school is funded by Capitation and other grants. Teacher resources, Special Needs Assistants, Bus Escorts and part-time Teacher grants are provided by the Department of Education and Skills and the school

operates within the regulations laid down from time to time by the Department. Additional staffing allocations, i.e. Special Needs Assistants, are determined by the NCSE.

In setting out and applying the school admissions policy, the Board of Management will have regard for the resources and funding from all the aforementioned sources.

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.

Ballyowen Meadows Special School follows the curricular programmes laid down by the Department of Education and Science, amended from time to time in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998), in order to provide an appropriate education for each child. The curricular programmes provided by the school are adapted to meet the particular special educational needs of pupils with autism.

Within the context and parameters of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need;
- Equality of access and participation in school;
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment;
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

While recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of choice, the Board of Management of Ballyowen Meadows Special School must also respect the rights of the existing school community and, in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice, and acting in the best interest of children.

ROUTINES AND GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The school day runs from 09.20 am to 02.00 pm for those children with less than two full years completed at primary school. After this, the school day runs from 9.20 am to 3.00 pm. These times are governed by the Department of Education and Skills Rules for National Schools and have been fully agreed upon with the Department's Inspectorate.
2. Children are not allowed to enter the school building until 09.20 am.
3. There is a 10 minute break in the morning and a 30 minute break for lunch. These times are staggered to ensure that small pupil numbers remain constant in the playground throughout the school day.
4. Children are dismissed at either 02.00 pm or 03.00 pm. Parents are asked to collect children from outside the front door of the school building. All children availing of school transport will remain in school until 03.00 pm when they will be escorted to their bus by the Class Teacher and Special Needs Assistants and received by the Bus Escort for their allocated bus.

5. Children who finish class at 02.00 pm may be collected at this time or remain in school and avail of an activity programme that is provided by their class teacher. This enables all pupils to travel home by school transport.
6. A list of school openings and closures will be sent to all parents following the offer and acceptance of a school place.
7. School Costs: The offer of a school place in Ballyowen Meadows Special School is not dependent on Parents making a financial contribution. As is typical in many other schools, Parents are requested to contribute towards school costs. As curriculum costs currently exceed the funding that is available to the school, Parents are requested to contribute €270 on an annual basis towards the costs associated with their child's education. The following is a breakdown of the school costs for 2019/20 for each child:

Assessment materials	€40.00
Computer printing	€45.00
Art materials	€35.00
Photocopying	€35.00
Specialist teaching materials	€45.00
Access to ICT resources	€50.00
Insurance/Accident Cover	€10.00
Home/School Communication Book	€10.00

In addition, Parents may be supplied with a booklist for their child, as compiled by their child's Class Teacher. These books may be made available to purchase through the school.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES TO BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL

The Admissions Policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 and any provisions of the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018 as commenced at the date of this policy in order to assist parents in relation to enrolment matters. The Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Principal will be happy to clarify any further questions arising from the policy.

All applications for admission to Ballyowen Meadows Special School must be in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

Applications for admission will be considered in the first instance by the Applications Committee chaired by the Board of Management and a place in the school will be offered by that Committee.

The Applications Committee will comprise the Board of Management, the Principal and Deputy Principal.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The following procedure will apply to all applications for placement:

- **Parents** send letter and/or make a telephone request for admission to the school.
- Requests for admission must be made by the child's **Parents**.
- Telephone calls and personal visits to the school concerning enrolment will be facilitated but are not in themselves enrolment applications.
- Child's details are placed on the record of expression of interest;
- Parents are sent a copy of the Admissions and Participation Policy and an application form;
- Parents are asked to return the following by the specified closing date:
 - Fully completed application form that has been signed by parents;
 - Birth certificate;
 - Proof of address;
 - The most recent Psychological assessment report;
 - School Report and IEP (if currently in a school setting);
 - Any other available professional reports such as the most recent:
 - Psychiatric Assessment
 - Speech & Language Assessment
 - Occupational Therapy Report
 - Social Work Report
 - Details relating to existing medical conditions and administration of medications
- The registration process is initiated on receipt by the school of a completed application. This form must be signed and dated by a parent. The form will be date stamped on receipt by the school. All additional documentation received by the school is recorded in the applications file.
- Date of application, child's date of birth, address and telephone contact number is recorded in the School Record of Applications. Entry into this file secures a place on the list of applicants only.
- An acknowledgement is sent to the applicant. This acknowledgement confirms that the School will assess the application under the criteria outlined here and does not confer any further status on the application.
- Following receipt of these documents and after the specified closing date, the Admissions Committee will meet to determine the allocation of places, as per the criteria as set out in this document. The closing date for applications will be given to parents with the Application Form;
- No additional documentation will be accepted following the closing date;

- The Admissions Committee, having considered each application, will compile a list of names of prospective pupils whose admission has been offered in accordance with the criteria. A letter of offer will then be sent to parents.
- If the number of applicants meeting the admissions criteria exceeds the number of vacancies, a waiting list will be drawn up in order of priority with reference to the criteria set out in the Admissions and Participation Policy. Parents will be informed in writing if they have been placed on a waiting list or not and the reason for this decision will be stated. Parents/guardians will be advised of the appeals procedure, as outlined in the Admissions and Participation Policy;
- Parents will be requested to respond by a specified date and a time will be arranged for them to visit the school to assist them in making this decision and enable the completion of school documentation and applications to the National Council for Special Education for school transport and Special Needs Assistant support, if applicable;
- Prior to accepting a school place, parents will be supplied with a copy of the Ballyowen Meadows Special School Code of Behaviour. As stated in this policy, under section 23 (4) of the Act of 1998, The Board of Management, as a condition of registering their child in the school, require parents to confirm in writing that the Ballyowen Meadows Special School Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to support compliance with said code by their child;
- Following an offer of a waitlist place, available school places will be offered to applicants in accordance with the place the applicant holds on the waitlist and the availability of a school place in an age-appropriate class;
- No additional documentation in support of an application for admission will be accepted at the appeals stage of the admissions process (please see appeals procedure below);
- When the successful applicants have accepted places and all places have been allocated, the School Principal will request additional information from Parents relating to confirmation of the registration and provider of clinical services for the child. Parents are advised that the HSE does not provide this information to schools. Therefore, the Parent must ensure that they are able to provide this information when it is sought by the school.
- Parents should also note that the Ballyowen Meadows Special School Code of Behaviour states that the school considers it of the utmost importance for all parents of pupils to avail of clinical services wherever possible. School Management wishes to highlight that where services are available and a Parent refuses to avail of clinical services their child's school place may be at risk.
- In the event that applications are received after the closing date of **Friday 14th February 2020**, such applications will only be considered if school places remain available;
- In order to facilitate the selection process and also for administration purposes, **no late applications will be considered after May 15th 2020.**
- Following the allocation of all available school places, all documentation will be retained in accordance with current data protection legislation.

Parents should note the following principles will apply to all applications for enrolment:

- Where possible, enrolment should take place at the beginning of the school year. In exceptional cases, consideration may be given to a child for whom admission is sought during the school year;
- No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accents, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious/political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances;
- The completion of an application form or the placement of a child's name on a list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school.

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications for admission to Ballyowen Meadows Special School will only be considered where a child meets all of the following criteria:

- **Threshold Criteria for Consideration of Application:**
 1. The child has a diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder as confirmed by the psychologist's/psychiatrist's report included with the child's application;
 2. The child is in the mild cognitive range or above (as confirmed by the psychologist's report included in the child's application) and therefore has the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered by Ballyowen Meadows Special School;
 3. The child is living within the catchment area i.e. is living within the following areas of counties Dublin and Wicklow (see Note 1 below):

County Dublin

Dublin 4	Ballsbridge, Belfield, Donnybrook, Irishtown, Merrion, Pembroke, Ringsend, Sandymount;
Dublin 6	Milltown, Ranelagh, Rathmines, Rathgar;
Dublin 6W	Harold's Cross, Templeogue, Kimmage, Terenure;
Dublin 14	Churchtown, Clonskeagh, Dundrum, Goatstown, Rathfarnham, Windy Arbour;
Dublin 16	Ballinteer, Ballyboden, Kilmashogue, Knocklyon, Rockbrook;
Dublin 18	Cabinteely, Carrickmines, Foxrock, Kilternan, Sandyford, Shankill, Ticknock, Ballyedmonduff, Stepside, Leopardstown;
Dublin 22	Clondalkin, Rowlagh, Quarryvale; Liffey Valley, Neilstown;
Dublin 24	Firhouse, Jobstown, Tallaght;
South Co. Dublin	Dun Laoghaire and Rathdown

Co. Wicklow

Wicklow	Bray, Enniskerry, Kilmacanoge, Powerscourt, Rathmichael, Delgany, Greystones, Kilcoole, Newcastle;
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Note 1:

- (a) In exceptional circumstances the Applications Committee may, in its absolute discretion, consider applications in respect of children living outside the catchment area as defined above but it will not be required to do so.
4. The child is at least 4 years old and not more than 12 by the 30th of June of the year of entry. Pupils typically transfer to post-primary school in the September following their twelfth birthday;
5. The child will benefit from an autism-specific education programme and this is confirmed by the psychologist's report included in the child's application. The psychologist's report must also clearly recommend as suitable a placement in a special school or a special class for ASD.
6. A school place exists in an age-appropriate class.

If the Applications Committee considers that a pupil satisfies the Threshold Criteria set out above, it will assess the application on the basis of the following additional criteria. The school has a limited number of places and must prioritise its available places for those pupils who would most benefit from them.

- **Criteria for Assessment of Applications which meet the Threshold Criteria**

Each application which meets the Threshold Criteria will be assessed on the basis of more specific criteria, as set out below. Where applications are of equal merit, priority will be given to children who will benefit most from early intervention.

1. The child is in the mild adaptive range or above (as confirmed by the psychologist's report included in the child's application) and therefore with the ability to benefit from the education and skills programmes offered by Ballyowen Meadows Special School;
2. The availability of resources to meet the particular needs of the child;
3. The child will be able to tolerate a classroom environment containing other children;
4. The composition of the proposed class group;
5. The pupil/teacher ratio will be appropriate to the needs of the child;
6. The applicant's medical needs can be safely managed by Staff;
7. The Admissions Committee are satisfied that the overall needs of the child can be met at Ballyowen Meadows Special School;
8. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of successful applicants are willing to engage with the school by signing Parent Agreement to e.g. Code of Behaviour, Parental Engagement Form and Personal Pupil Plan;

9. A Dual Enrolment between Ballyowen Meadows Special School and a specified mainstream primary school will be considered by the Admissions Committee in cases where such an arrangement is deemed to be appropriate to the needs of the child. In such circumstances, where it is considered to be appropriate to the needs of the child, it will be the responsibility of **Parents** to identify and approach a suitable mainstream school that is agreeable to a dual enrolment arrangement for the child. Please see below an explanation of the Dual Enrolment concept and process.

DUAL ENROLMENT

A dual enrolment occurs when a pupil is in a joint enrolment in two schools, one special school and one mainstream primary school. Therefore, the time spent during each school week is split between the mainstream and special school.

Currently, there is no formal Department of Education and Skills scheme for dual enrolment. Therefore, when it takes place, it is an arrangement that is agreed between the child's Parents and the two schools. Parents are advised that there is no obligation on Ballyowen Meadows Special School (BMSS) or on a mainstream school to agree to a dual enrolment.

However, BMSS has a strong commitment to inclusive education, as stated in our School Ethos and Vision Statement, and we place inclusion at the core of our curriculum delivery. Therefore, we place a high value on continuing to offer a dual enrolment option when it is considered that it will be beneficial for our pupils.

Procedure for Dual Enrolment Applications:

- As outlined above, as part of an application to the school, a Parent may make a request for a dual enrolment placement if they think that their child will benefit from such an arrangement. The School Management will then consider this request alongside the remaining criteria contained in the Ballyowen Meadows Special School Admissions and Participation Policy.
- Following an application for dual enrolment, further information may be sought regarding the details of the mainstream school, the individual needs of your child and how you think that your child will benefit from a dual enrolment arrangement.
- A Parent request for a dual enrolment can be made to the School Management of Ballyowen Meadows Special School at the time of your child's application for a school place. Your child's application will then be considered as an application for dual enrolment in Ballyowen Meadows Special School and a mainstream school.
- Additionally, a mainstream school may wish to propose a dual enrolment for a pupil and this will be considered by the School Management of Ballyowen Meadows Special School, following an application made to Ballyowen Meadows Special School by the Parent of the child.
- Parents are advised that they should supply the name and contact details of the mainstream school at the time of their child's application to Ballyowen Meadows Special School.
- Prior to consideration of a Parental request for dual enrolment by School Management, parental permission must be provided to Ballyowen Meadows Special School granting permission for discussion of their child's needs with the mainstream school.

- Following receipt of parental permission, further information may be sought regarding the details of the mainstream school, the individual needs of your child and how you think that your child will benefit from a dual enrolment arrangement.
- School management may also seek further clinical recommendations in relation to the suitability of a dual enrolment between a mainstream and special school setting. Parents seeking admission to Ballyowen Meadows Special School must arrange for this additional clinical input and make it available to the Admissions Committee before a decision will be taken.
- School Management will then apply the remaining criteria contained in the Ballyowen Meadows Special School Admissions and Participation Policy to your child's application to Ballyowen Meadows Special School for a school place.

PROVISION OF CLINICAL SERVICES

Enrolment in Ballyowen Meadows Special School involves the provision of Special Education for all pupils. The primary school currently offers 48 educational placements for pupils with autism. Clinical services are provided for some pupils by the Health Service Executive through Beechpark Clinical Services, the School Age Team, Early Services Team, Lucena Clinic and the Oak Team. Clinical Services are also provided to some pupils through other routes, such as through their local HSE health centre. These services typically include the following:

- Psychology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Psychiatry
- Occupational Therapy
- Social Work

Ballyowen Meadows Special School has no control over these services, but merely acts as a relevant setting for their provision. The allocation of clinical services to the pupils of Ballyowen Meadows Special School is a matter for the provider of clinical services, e.g. Beechpark Services, HSE, etc., which shall determine which pupils are allocated clinical services.

All queries about these services must be addressed to the Health Service Executive and not Ballyowen Meadows Special School and any such queries should be made following the offer and acceptance of a school place.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Parents/Guardians of children enrolled in Ballyowen Meadows Special School are required to co-operate with and support all school policies, including the Code of Behaviour, and where appropriate and necessary, to support their children in achieving co-operation with these policies in an age and/or ability-appropriate way.

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The partnership between parent and school is highly valued by Ballyowen Meadows Special School as it is considered essential for the educational progress and overall well-being of each of our pupils. To ensure that we maintain a positive engagement with Parents, the school requires the following of all Parents:

- All parents will be required to provide a written commitment confirming that they agree to full engagement with the school in respect to their child's education.
- Parents are required to provide a written commitment confirming that they agree to fully engage with the school in a positive and mutually respectful way in relation to contributing to school development matters as they arise.
- Parents are required to fully commit to attending all school meetings concerning their child. Attendance at Personal Pupil Plan meetings is of particular importance and is considered essential for the educational progress of each child.
- The school also expects that Parents will attend all school events involving their child, school concerts and Parent training sessions.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Following a recommendation contained in a psychological report for a special school placement, a child may avail of School Transport, subject to sanction by the National Council for Special Education and Department of Education and Skills. Ballyowen Meadows Special School will endeavour to do its utmost to recruit Bus Escorts, but cannot provide a guarantee that this will always be possible and in the event that a Bus Escort cannot be provided, then parents will be responsible for taking their child to and from school.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANTING REFUSAL OF AN ENROLMENT

Admission to the school is, of course, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation and class size and is also subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission. Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant, it will make every effort to secure those resources prior to, or as soon as practicable after enrolment. Where, in very exceptional circumstances, the resources cannot be secured, the school reserves the right to refuse admission. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians of any child to inform the school of any such needs on the enrolment application form for the child's own welfare. In this context the school authorities will have equal regard for the welfare of all students and their right to an education in an atmosphere that is not detrimental to their physical, emotional, social or intellectual development.

The school reserves the right to refuse enrolment to a pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise in the following circumstances:

1. Failure by parents to fully complete all admissions and enrolment requirements;
2. Following offer of a school place, failure by parents to supply the necessary information, as requested by the Department of Education and Skills for submission to the Primary On-Line Database (POD);
3. Relevant information in relation to the level of a child's needs has been omitted during the admissions process, and therefore, the admissions sub-committee have not been in receipt of all necessary information and/or documentation prior to making recommendations to the Board of Management regarding the allocation of school places;
4. The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Science and/or the National Council of Special Education, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education;
5. School Management are reasonably clear from reports, that the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to self or other pupils, to school staff or to school property;
6. **The Board of Management also reserves the right to delay enrolment when parents/guardians have omitted to provide all information relating to their child's medical condition, particularly if this relates to the Administration of Medication or care for a medical need that requires specific non-medical training for Staff.**

Please refer to the Administration of Medication Policy (available on request from the School Office)

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Following acceptance of a school place for their child, Parents will be requested to provide information in the instance that their child requires medication to be administered during the school day. Parents must complete and return this form to the school confirming whether or not Parents wish to request medication to be administered by school staff to their child.

In the event that Parents wish to make this request they will be supplied with an indemnity form and a Parent Request Form for the Administration of Medication by School Staff to be completed in full and returned to the school office by **1st June prior to the September of entry** to Ballyowen Meadows Special School.

All requests for the administration of medication by school staff received by **1st June** prior to the September of entry will then be considered and Parents will receive a response to their request before the school reopens in September.

Requests for the administration of medication that are received on the school re-opening in September will be considered as soon as is practicable after the date on which the request was received. In the interim, as the request is under consideration, **school staff cannot administer medication to the child and Parents will be responsible for the administration of medication until such time as approval is granted by the School Management.**

Parents are advised that medication refers to all forms of medication, including oral solution, tablet and inhalers. This list is not exhaustive.

Parents are also advised that medication will not be administered to pupils unless a formal Parental request and a completed medical indemnity form has been received and approved by the School Management.

Parents' particular attention is drawn to the following:

- the staff of Ballyowen Meadows Special School are not medically trained and, as such, are **not permitted** by the School Management to administer medication in certain forms and by certain methods. Currently, this policy covers medication in the form of a suppository to be administered anally.
- In the case that a child is at risk when not in receipt of emergency medication, the Board of Management may delay enrolment until clarity is provided in relation to the medical condition and the prescribed medication and, if administration of medication is approved, until staff training has taken place.
- Parents are also advised that school staff cannot administer medication in the instance that a child refuses to take their medication.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

An internal appeal's procedure may take place if a Parent is unhappy with the decision made by the Board of Management in relation to an application for admission to the school. If a Parent wishes to appeal the decision of the Board of Management, they may write to the Board of Management at the school address within 7 days of receipt of the Board's decision.

Only documentation supplied by the applicant to the school prior to the original closing date will be considered on appeal. Therefore, no additional documentation pertaining to the applicant will be accepted as part of an appeal.

The Board of Management will then consider the appeal. Parents will receive a response from the Board within 14 days of receipt of the appeal. Parents, if unhappy with the result of the final appeal of the Board of Management, may appeal to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, on the official form provided by the Department. Appeal forms are available to download on the Department of Education and Skills website, www.education.ie. Please note that this appeal must be lodged **within 42 days of receipt of the refusal** of the Board of Management to enrol a child.

EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy. This policy will be amended and updated, as required.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW OF POLICY

- School Principal
- Admissions sub-committee
- Board of Management

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

- This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on: 14 January 2020
- Following annual review, this policy is sent to all parents of pupils who are listed on the School's Expression of Interest List along with a School Place Application Form.
- This policy will also be available on the school website.