



BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL SPECIAL SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS AND PARTICIPATION POLICY 2023/24 (FOR APPLICANTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023)

KEY INFORMATION – Applications Committee	
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. 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.
- 1.2. The policy was approved by the school patron (see 2.3. below) on 7 August 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.
- 1.3. The relevant dates and timelines for the Ballyowen Meadows Special School 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.
- 1.4. This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual Admission Notice for the school year in question.
- 1.5. 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

- 2.1. Ballyowen Meadows Special School caters for children aged typically from 4-12 years with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the mild cognitive range or above for whom a special school placement is appropriate. The catchment area includes South Dublin and North Wicklow.
- 2.2. Ballyowen Meadows Special School also operates a separate Early Intervention Class approved by the NCSE and Minister for Education & Skills for children aged 3-5 with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) which has a separate admissions procedure set out in Appendix 1 of this policy.
- 2.3. 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.

2.4. The Health Service Executive using the Progressing Disability model provide a range of clinical supports 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 provided by the Children's Disability Network Teams which each child has access to within their area of residence.

2.5. The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils - cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual - in a therapeutic and 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.

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

Principal	1
Class teachers	8
Part-time specialist subject teacher	1
Special needs assistants	28.66
School secretary	1
School caretaker	1
Bus Escorts	13

2.7. 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.

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

2.9. 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 Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

2.10. 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.

2.11. Ballyowen Meadows Special School is totally committed to providing a happy stimulating environment for all our students to allow them to develop to their full potential. This is achieved by offering a curriculum which is broad enough to meet the wide range of special educational needs whilst having enough depth to challenge all our pupils. We aim to offer a wide variety of learning experiences which will provide moral and intellectual growth whilst encouraging self-confidence and high self-esteem. We aim to foster, through carefully planned individual educational programmes, independence, dignity, self-discipline, social independence and competent handling of basic daily needs. This prepares each student as far as possible, for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Finally, we endeavour to establish firm contact and communication with the families of all our pupils as the success of what we hope to achieve depends on the co-operation and support of every parent/guardian.

2.12. The decision-making process regarding admissions is set out in this document. Enrolment is contingent, amongst other things, on the availability of a suitable vacancy in the school for the age and educational needs of an applicant.

2.13. Classroom capacity varies according to the range of needs of the children we are catering for at a particular time. As a result, class groups may vary in size depending on the number of pupils within a class presenting with additional needs. In this regard, the Principal may deem some classes to be full to capacity and advise the Board of Management accordingly.

3. Admission Statement

3.1. Each child is considered as an individual. The Board of Management strives to ensure that every child accepted into Ballyowen Meadows Special School can benefit from the services on offer. The decision as to who will benefit involves the consideration of a wide range of issues. These issues will include the parents'/guardians' views on the proposed educational placement of their child, existing resources available, additional learning and medical needs (for example ADHD, severe emotional behavioural disorder, dysphasia, epilepsy, etc.) social needs, emotional and behavioural needs. While recognising the right of parents/guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management is also responsible for respecting 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 all children.

3.2. In the admissions process, consideration will be given to ensure that a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff prevails and applications for children who might seriously threaten the safety of the children already enrolled, many of whom are vulnerable by nature of their disability are likely to be refused.

3.3. In accordance with Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998, this policy sets out the Ballyowen Meadows Special School policy on the admission of students and their participation in the school.

3.4. In accordance with Section 61 of the Education Act 1998, the school confirms that the school shall not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the 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 or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned.
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs.

3.5. Ballyowen Meadows Special School is a school which, with the approval of the Minister and Department of Education and Skills provides an education exclusively to students with a certain category of special educational needs, that being students **who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the mild cognitive range or above**. The school will therefore refuse to admit students whose educational needs do not fall within this category and a refusal to admit a child who does not have these educational needs will not constitute discrimination.

3.6. This policy aims to uphold the moral, spiritual, physical and psychological welfare and constitutional rights of all persons concerned. The school will strive to ensure that the principle of “reasonable accommodation” is enacted for all students.

3.7. Places in the school are allotted each September to applicants who meet the Threshold Criteria in order of priority to those applicants who are rated highest on the criteria set out in section 5.7 below.

3.8. Ballyowen Meadows Special School will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation 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.

3.9. Ballyowen Meadows Special School will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b).

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

4.1. Ballyowen Meadows Special School is a school which with the approval of the Minister and Department of Education and Skills provides an education exclusively to students who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the mild cognitive range or above.

5. Admission of Students and Admissions Process

5.1. General Principle

Ballyowen Meadows Special School provides an education exclusively for students who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the mild cognitive range or above and may refuse admission where the student does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for by this school. Ballyowen Meadows Special School must verify that all applicants possess this category of need. The steps below are for the purpose of ascertaining if applicants come within the category of special needs catered for by the school and the steps therefore apply to **all applications** regardless of whether the destination class in question is oversubscribed or not.

5.2. Overview of Application and Admissions Process

5.2.1. On publication of the Admissions notice on the website, parents/guardians are asked to contact the school to obtain an Application Form from the school office or download one from the school's website. This form must be completed in full and all requested documentation must be included to be considered for admission. Applications will only be accepted for the following year of entry from

the 1st October onwards. The Application Form **must be** returned before the Closing Date for Applications for that particular year of entry. The closing date is set out in the annual Admissions Notice published on the school website. (for example, applications for September 2030 will only be taken from October 1st 2029 to the Closing Date).

5.2.2. Please note that applications for a new school year are accepted **ONLY AFTER** 1st October of the previous year. Applications received before that period **WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED** and will be returned to the sender. Applications which are returned to a parent due to the application being received out of time can be appealed in accordance with the procedure set out at Section 18 below.

5.2.3. Please note that Ballyowen Meadows Special School does not have a particular intake group as many mainstream schools do. In our school, we accept applications from children aged between 4 and 12 each year for our Primary classes (admissions for our Early Intervention Class are dealt with separately in Appendix 1). When an application is being considered, the appropriateness of a particular destination class is determined by the child's age, assessed cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special needs of relevance.

5.2.4. Please note that subject to the school **not** being **oversubscribed** (i.e. that there are places available in the destination class considered appropriate to the applicant) the policy of the school is to admit all applicants

- whose special education needs fall within the categories of need catered for by the school, and
- who have submitted the appropriate documentation to establish this profile of special educational need, and
- who fulfil the Threshold criteria set out below at Section 5.7, and
- whose parents/guardians have confirmed that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by their child.

5.3. Initial School Visit

Before making any application, the child's parents/guardians may wish to consider visiting the school so that they will be better able to decide on the suitability of the school for their child. Such a visit will not give their child any

priority and is solely to allow the parents inform themselves better about the school.

5.4. *Who can make an Application?*

Ballyowen Meadows Special School welcomes applications from parents/guardians. As the Constitution recognises parents as the primary educators of their child, applications will only be accepted from parents, legal guardians or someone acting on foot of a court order or statutory power in a parental role.

5.5. *Steps in the Application and Admissions Process*

The following procedure will apply to all applications for placement in the school:

- a) Parents/guardians download a copy of the Admissions and Participation Policy and Application Form from the school website or obtain it from the School Office;
- b) Parents are asked to return the following:
 - i. Completed Application form;
 - ii. Copy of full birth certificate;
 - iii. Copies of two proofs of address e.g. utility bill; household bill, etc.
 - iv. Copy of the most recent psychological assessment report (from within the last 24 months and which must contain a detailed recommendation from the Psychologist for the child to attend a special school with a statement from the Psychologist as to why a special school placement is necessary or advisable.);
 - v. Copies of up-to-date reports and IEP from the child's present school/pre-school (from within the last 12 months) with the details of the learning and social development of the child and any behaviour issues of relevance;
 - vi. Copies of any other professional reports available such as:
 - Psychiatric Assessment,
 - Speech & Language Assessment,
 - Occupational Therapy Report,
 - Social Work Report

N.B All above reports generally should be from within 3 years of the date of application.

If **all** the documents listed at 5.5 (b)(i)- (vi) are not included with the application, the application will be deemed incomplete, will be returned to the child's parents and will not be considered.

- c) Following receipt of the Application form and submitted materials, the Applications Committee will arrange a meeting to determine the allocation of places, as per the criteria set out below.
- d) The Applications Committee, having considered each application (in light of the Threshold Criteria and where applicable the criteria set out below in Section 6.1) submits its recommendations to the Board of Management in respect of each application. This will occur regardless of whether the school/destination class is oversubscribed or not. The Assessment criteria used to rank applications in case of oversubscription are set out below in Section 6. The Board of Management shall review each application and the recommendation of the Applications Committee in each case.
- e) If the Board of Management decides to admit a child, a letter of offer will be sent to parents along with the school's Code of Behaviour. This letter of offer will be issued within 21 days of the Closing Date for applications (or within 21 days of the receipt of the application, whichever is the later). The offer will be subject to parents providing written agreement for their child to adhere to the school's Code of behaviour and the other policies listed on the Application Form. If the Board of Management have accepted the child for admission, the Board will then inform the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the decision and seek its approval for the placement and its sanction for school transport. This process may take a minimum of 4 to 6 weeks. If the Board decides not to enrol a child the parents of the child will also be informed within 21 days and will be provided with reasons for non-admission.
- f) Parents/guardians will be requested to respond to the offer of a place by a specified date (failure to respond by that date will result in the offer lapsing) and will return to the school the completed application forms including the NCSE school transport and SNA support forms, if applicable;
- g) If the child meets the Threshold Criteria below but admission is refused due to there not being capacity in the destination class, parents/guardians will

be informed that there is currently no place available and that their child will be placed on the Waiting List (See section 13). The school will advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.

- h) If the child does not meet the Threshold Criteria below, the parents/guardians will be advised that the school is formally declining a place to their child in the school and will advise the parents of the appeals procedure set out below.

5.6. Principles applying to the Application and Enrolment Process

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

- 5.6.1. Where possible, enrolment should take place at the beginning of the school year. In exceptional cases, consideration will be given to an application during the school year where a vacancy arises and there is no applicant listed on the waiting list for that particular class.
- 5.6.2. The receipt by the school of a completed 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. The school does not operate its applications process on a first come, first served basis - each application will be considered on its merits and in light of the places available in the different classes in the school.
- 5.6.3. Siblings of students in the school are not automatically entitled to a place in the school.
- 5.6.4. Please note that **all reports** relating to a child which have been drafted by a psychologist, psychiatrist, behavioral therapist, pediatrician or other relevant medical practitioner (who has produced a report relating to the child's cognitive development, learning ability or educational development) within **the three years** preceding application **must** be provided to the school for assessment by the Board of Management. The withholding of reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an Admission Application at any time. If, after admission, it later becomes apparent that reports or relevant information has been withheld from the school, this may result in an application being invalidated or, if it becomes apparent after admission, in the child involved losing their place in the school.

5.7. Consideration of applications -

Threshold Criteria for Consideration of Application:

- i) Applications will only be considered where the appropriate professional's report included in the child's application confirms that the child has both
- an Autism Spectrum Disorder as diagnosed by a Psychiatrist/Psychologist
 - a mild general learning disability with an IQ on standardised IQ Tests of 50 or greater and less than 69 together with an adaptive ability in the mild range, as assessed by a Psychologist

AND where **ALL** the following conditions are met:

1. The application form was fully completed and included all enclosures appropriate to the application.
2. The child is at least 4 years old and has not reached their 12th birthday on the 1st of September of the year of entry for the primary level classes.
3. 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 that placement in a special school be sought for the child.
4. The recommended destination class is suitable for the child in light of the child's age, cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special educational needs of relevance.
5. The recommended destination class has not reached full capacity (ie. the class is not over-subscribed).
6. At least one of the assessment reports provided is from the last 12 months and all of the assessment reports are from within 3 years of the date of application.
7. That there is **no** evidence from previous school reports or from the assessment reports that the student has been expelled from a previous school for behavior that caused injury to others.
8. The child's primary diagnosis is not one of Emotional and Behavior Disorder.

5.8. Provision of, and availing of clinical services

- 5.8.1. When the successful applicants have accepted places and all places have been allocated, the School Principal will request additional information from Parents/Guardians relating to confirmation of the

registration and provider of clinical services for the child. Parents/Guardians are advised that the HSE does not provide this information to schools. Therefore, the Parents/Guardians must ensure that they are able to provide this information when it is sought by the school.

5.8.2. Parents/Guardian 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.

5.9. Exceptional Circumstances warranting refusal of an admission

Even where the child would otherwise be eligible for admission, the school reserves the right to refuse admission to a pupil in exceptional cases. Such an exceptional case could arise where either:

- 5.9.1. The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills and/or the NCSE, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education;
- 5.9.2. The Board of Management is of the view, based on available professional reports, that the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to self or other pupils, to school staff or to school property.
- 5.9.3. The pupil has previously been expelled from Ballyowen Meadows Special School or any other school in circumstances where the Board of Management feels that placement in Ballyowen Meadows Special School would not be appropriate for the child.

5.10. Dual Enrolment

5.10.1. 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, it will be the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to identify and approach a suitable mainstream school that is agreeable to a dual enrolment arrangement for the child.

5.10.2. 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.

5.10.3. 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.

5.10.4. 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.

5.10.5. Parents and Guardians should note that applications where dual enrolment may be considered will be subject to the same threshold and assessment criteria as any other application would be and will go through the same processes outlined elsewhere in this policy.

5.10.6. Procedure for Dual Enrolment Applications:

5.10.6.1. 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 other criteria contained in the Ballyowen Meadows Special School Admissions and Participation Policy.

5.10.6.2. 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.

5.10.6.3. A Parent/Guardian 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.

5.10.6.4. 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/Guardian of the child.

5.10.6.5. 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.

5.10.6.6. Prior to consideration of a request for dual enrolment, the parent must grant permission to Ballyowen Meadows Special School for discussion of their child's needs with the mainstream school.

5.10.6.7. 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.

5.10.6.8. 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/Guardians seeking admission to Ballyowen Meadows Special School must arrange for this additional clinical input and make it available to the Applications Committee before a decision will be taken.

5.10.6.9. 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.

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 received within the timeframe for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice.

6.1. Priority of Applications

Where the destination class is oversubscribed, places will be offered each September to qualifying applicants (i.e. those who meet all the Threshold Criteria) based on a ranking of their application on the following additional Assessment Criteria set out below.

The school has a limited number of places and must prioritise its available places for those students who would most benefit from them. Where the documentation provided is not adequate or is not in accordance with the requirements of this policy, this may result in an applicant receiving a nil score in a particular category. The Applications Committee will rate each application and will make a recommendation to the Board in respect of each such application.

Assessment Criteria:

1. The extent to which the child would benefit from a place in the school, given the child's primary need of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), age and educational history, taking into account any other needs the child may have, for example, Down Syndrome, Fragile X, ADD/ADHD, severe emotional behavioural disorder, physical and sensory disabilities, and medical conditions (rated out of 20).
2. The availability of expertise within the school to deal with any other needs the child may have, for example, Down Syndrome, Fragile X, ADD/ADHD, severe emotional behavioural disorder, physical and sensory disabilities, and medical conditions (rated out of 10).
3. As the school prioritises early intervention, applications from younger applicants for destination classes will be prioritised. Applicants for each destination class will be given marks with 10 marks for the youngest applicant for that destination class and 1 for the oldest and appropriate marks for each applicant in between based on their age. (total possible marks of 10).
4. The pupil/teacher ratio will be appropriate to the needs of the child; (rated out of 10).
5. The child will be able to tolerate a classroom environment containing other children. (rated out of 10).
6. The composition, special needs and ages of the pupils currently enrolled in the class into which the child would be admitted; (rated out of 10).
7. There is sufficient physical space in the relevant classroom and the appropriate class for that child has not reached full capacity. (rated out of 10).
8. The child is ordinarily resident (i.e. is ordinarily resident with at least one parent) within the catchment area (as defined in Appendix Four) and

has provided two proofs of address with an Eircode from one of the areas listed in Appendix Four. (rated out of 10).

6.2. It may occasionally occur that a child requires such additional physical space, resources or staffing support that that child effectively requires the equivalent of two or more places in that class. This may correspondingly reduce the number of other places available or may mean that even where the Board has identified a class grouping as having two available places, that class would now be full in light of that child's needs. Such a circumstance is likely to be rare but it is within the discretion of the Board to limit class size where required for safety or educational reasons.

6.3. If there is no place available for the child in the destination class, then the application will be refused and the child's name will be put on the waiting list. If there is a place available in a particular destination class and there are a number of applicants for the same place, then the Board will rank each such application in accordance with their marks from the Assessment Criteria above and the Board will offer any available places to applicants based on their ranking on these criteria. Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the Waiting List in the order of their marks on the above Assessment Criteria.

6.4. In the event of two or more children who are candidates for the same place having the same marks, the Board will first review the marking again for each such child. If the respective marks remain the same after this review, the children's names will be chosen at random by an independent person (who is not on the Board or connected with any person applying for a place in the school) and the first such name chosen will be offered the place. Unsuccessful applicants whose applications are ranked with the same marks will be placed on the Waiting List for the destination class in the order that they are picked at random by the independent person referred to above.

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 (howsoever described) to the school;
- c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude other than to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs catered for by Ballyowen Meadows Special School;
- 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;
- g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school.

8. Decisions on applications

8.1. The Board of Management of the school makes the final decision concerning the admission of any child. It may choose to set up a sub-committee, an Applications Committee, to assess the suitability of the needs of the child to the services available at the school. This committee will advise the Board of Management as to the suitability of the applicants under consideration. The Applications Committee will be composed of the Principal and the Deputy Principal.

8.2. The Board of Management will meet shortly after the Closing Date to consider all applications and the recommendations of the Applications Committee in relation to each application.

8.3. All decisions on applications for admission to Ballyowen Meadows Special School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form (together the documentation submitted therewith) received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications
- The application of the assessment criteria as set out in this policy.

8.4. Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the “intake group”.

8.5. 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

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

9.2. 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.

9.3. 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 Ballyowen Meadows Special School, 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 the Board of Management of Ballyowen Meadows Special School where—

(i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading (including through the omission of any medical or psychological report, or the submission of out of date or inaccurate reports).

- (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 of this policy 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 data 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 Ballyowen Meadows 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 Ballyowen Meadows 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.

13.1. *Waiting List*

13.1.1. Where a place is not available for a particular child who otherwise meets the Threshold Criteria listed above in Section 5.7 and the Board of Management is refusing to enrol the child in a particular class, the child will be placed on the Waiting List.

13.1.2. The Waiting List will operate for one school year. It will run until the end of the Academic Year for which the offers were made in that Applications Process. **On the last of day in June of each year, the Waiting list will cease to operate.**

13.1.3. If a child is entered on the Waiting List for a particular academic year, this will not give them any priority for entry in the academic year commencing the following September. A new application for the child will be required for the following academic year. His/her application will be processed again under the Admissions and Participation Policy.

13.1.4. The child will be listed on the Waiting List only in respect of the class for which his/her application was considered (the destination class) and each child will be listed on that Waiting List in the order of their ranking according to the Assessment Criteria. If a place becomes available during the Academic Year in the destination class, the place will be offered first to qualifying children in the order they are listed on the school's Waiting List for that class and only after that to children who make Mid -Year Applications (see section 15.2 below).

13.1.5. Parents should note that, if during the academic year in question a child on the Waiting List ceases for any reason to meet all the Threshold Criteria, the child will be removed from the Waiting List and will be formally refused a place in the school.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission for a particular academic year received after the Closing Date for that year will be considered in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018 and any

regulations made under that Act. Late applicants should note that the school is usually heavily oversubscribed and any such places that are available will normally be allotted to applications received before the Closing Date.

Late applications will be waitlisted (assuming they meet the Threshold Criteria referred to above). However, they will be ranked on the Waitlist below applications (i.e. at the end of the Waiting List) submitted in time before the Closing Date but which have been waitlisted due to over-subscription. Late Applications which do not meet the Threshold Criteria above will be refused and the parents/guardians informed of their rights of appeal/review set out below in Section 18.

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

15.1. 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:

15.1.1. Ballyowen Meadows Special School is a special school, and as such it does not have a particular intake group as many mainstream schools do. In our school, we accept applications from children aged between 4 and 12 each year for the primary level. When an application is being considered, the appropriateness of a particular destination class is determined by the child's age, assessed cognitive and adaptive abilities and any other special needs of relevance.

15.2. The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of student who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as follows:

15.2.1. All applications for admission for a particular academic year received after the start of the academic year will be treated as a Mid-Year Application for that year and will be considered in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act. Applicants should note that the school is usually heavily oversubscribed and there are rarely if ever any vacancies during the school year. Vacancies are normally filled from a waiting list operated by the school in accordance with the procedures above. Mid-year applications will therefore most likely be waitlisted (assuming they meet the Threshold Criteria referred to

above) for the academic year in question. Mid-year applications which meet the Threshold criteria above will be placed at the end of the Waiting List. Mid-year applications which do not meet the Threshold Criteria above will be refused and the parents/guardians informed of their rights of appeal/review set out below in Section 18.

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

The Board of Management of Ballyowen Meadows Special School 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 admission of a student in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

Ballyowen Meadows does not provide formal religious instruction on a day to day basis. Traditionally, on a case by case basis, the school has facilitated the practical preparations for First Communion for students who are of a Roman Catholic denomination. The students are based in various classes throughout the school. Alternate arrangements are put in place for those students who are not participating in these Programmes and there is no reduction in their school day.

18. Reviews/appeals

18.1. Review of decisions by the Board of Management

- 18.1.1. The parent of 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.
- 18.1.2. 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.
- 18.1.3. 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.
- 18.1.4. **Note:** 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.

18.1.5. 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.

18.2. **Right of appeal**

18.2.1. Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

18.2.2. 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.

18.2.3. 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.

18.2.4. 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)

18.2.5. 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)

18.2.6. 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.

18.2.7. The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals 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.

19. Progression at the School and continued participation in the School.

While it is envisaged that, once admitted, most students will remain in Ballyowen Meadows Special School until they complete their primary education at 12 years of age, a child's ongoing participation at Ballyowen Meadows Special School is contingent upon certain conditions:

- 19.1. The parent continues to adhere to the Code of Behaviour commitment given on admission
- 19.2. Some children's needs may change overtime and exceed what the school can cater for.
- 19.3. If at any point during the child's time in the school, a psychiatrist or psychologist assesses the child and confirms in writing that:
 - a) allowing the child to remain may result in adverse educational outcomes for the child or other children in the school, or
 - b) if the child applied for admission to the school now, he or she would not meet the admissions requirements of this policy, particularly in terms of the child's primary diagnosis, the presence of Emotional and Behavioural Disorder as a primary diagnosis or where his/her cognitive level has fallen within the moderate range or below.

After engaging in consultation with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and having reviewed the assessment report of the professional in question, the Board of Management may decide to remove the child's name from the school roll and offer the child's place to another child.

- 19.4. If at any point during the child's time in the school, the Principal recommends to the Board of Management that a child enrolled in the school be sent for an assessment of the type referred to in paragraph 19.3, the Board shall seek the parent's consent for this assessment. If this consent is not forthcoming the Board may have to take a decision without the benefit of such a report and may proceed to as per paragraph 19.6 below.
- 19.5. The report of the professional conducting the assessment will be furnished to the parents. They will be given an opportunity to respond to it and, if appropriate, to obtain a report from another appropriate professional responding to the report. Any responding report or parental response must be provided within 6 weeks of the school notifying the parents of the commencement of this process.

- 19.6. The Board of Management will also ask the Principal for a detailed report setting out her/his recommendations.
- 19.7. All available reports (including the Principal's report) will be considered by the Board at a meeting. The parents of the child will also be provided with a copy of the Principal's report and will have the opportunity to address the Board at that meeting before the Board retires to take its decision in private. The parents will be notified of the Board's decision within 5 school days of the Board meeting to consider the reports.
- 19.8. The Board may decide to
- 19.8.1. allow the child to continue to be enrolled in the school for a specified period before the child's needs are reviewed again, or
 - 19.8.2. allow the child to continue to be enrolled in the school until they reach the age of 12 and would no longer be enrolled, or
 - 19.8.3. dis-enrol the child by removing their name from the school roll and offering the child's place to another child.
- 19.9. As dis-enrolment would involve the permanent exclusion of the child in accordance with S.29(1)(a) of the Education Act 1998, the child's parents may appeal this to the Department of Education and Skills within 42 days of the date of the decision to dis-enrol the child.
- 19.10. Where a child is being dis-enrolled from the school, the school will make every effort to support families to make the transition to another placement.

Reviewed: 12 December 2022

Ratified by the Board of Management: 29/04/2020

Chairperson: Pat Kitterick

Appendix 1
Ballyowen Meadows Special School
Admissions to Early Intervention Class

Preamble

In addition to providing for children of primary school age (4-12 years) with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD) and who are in the mild cognitive range of intellectual functioning, Ballyowen Meadows Special School offers places in an Early Intervention Class (EIC) for children with early diagnosis of ASD.

The following is the admission information relevant to the Early Intervention Class:

General information

1. Children attending this class are aged between 3 and 5 years. Children may remain in this class for a maximum of two years; the upper age limit being five years on admission to the class.
2. Children who have reached their 6th birthday on the 1st September of the year of admission will fall outside the inclusion age.
3. The composition of the class may be any combination of 3, 4 and 5-year olds.
4. Following the two years in the Early Intervention Special Class, children may attend their local primary school or a school of their parents' choice and by their parents' arrangement.
5. There is no automatic transfer from the Early Intervention Special Class to the primary classes in Ballyowen Meadows Special School.
6. There is a separate Admissions and Participation Policy for entry into the primary-age classes in Ballyowen Meadows Special School which will be adhered to in all cases. If parents of children admitted to the Early Intervention Class regard Ballyowen Meadows Special School as a suitable school for their primary-age child they should apply to the school by contacting the School Office and requesting an application form. They will subsequently be contacted regarding their application in due course.

Threshold Criteria for Consideration of Applications to the EIC:

- 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) Preference will be given to children who are assessed as functioning in the mild cognitive range or above (as confirmed by the psychologist's report included in the child's application), as this cognitive range matches the category of

intellectual disability which is catered for by Ballyowen Meadows Special School;

- 3) The child is living within the catchment area (please see Appendix 4 below).
Note: 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 3 years old and not more than 5 by the 1st of September of the year of entry;
- 5) Children can remain in the Early Intervention Special Class for a maximum of two years and a child must be in his/her primary school placement in the year of his/her 6th birthday;
- 6) 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.

Each application that meets the Threshold Criteria will be assessed using the criteria listed above in the main policy document. The school has a limited number of places in the Early Intervention Class and must prioritise its available places for those pupils who would most benefit from them.

Additional information:

1. The EIC school day runs from 09.20 am to 02.00 pm for those children who are aged between 4 and 6 years. Those children who are aged between 3 and 4 years finish at 12.20 pm, although times for the younger children may be shortened depending on the individual needs of the child. Times will be different in the opening weeks of the school year to allow for gradual and individual settling in time. 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 30minute break for lunch. These times are staggered across all classes to ensure that small numbers remain constant in the playground throughout the school day.
4. Children are dismissed at either 12.20 pm or 02.00 pm. Parents are asked to collect their child from outside the front door of the school building at their child's finish time. All children availing of school transport will remain in school until the bus arrives for collection at which time they will be escorted to their

bus by their Class Teacher and Special Needs Assistants and received by the Bus Escort for their allocated bus.

5. The curriculum will represent a downward extension of the Primary Curriculum for Infants and Aistear. Each child will be provided with a Personal Pupil Plan, which contains an Individual Education Plan and Care Plan. Following assessment, there will be a focus on developmental needs and those needs associated with ASD.
6. Pupils' progress will be monitored on a regular basis. All placements are subject to review at the request of parents/guardians and/or the school. The review will include input from all parties involved in the child's education.
7. A list of school holidays and closures will be sent to all parents following the offer and acceptance of a school place.
8. 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 2020/21 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 will be made available to purchase through the school.

Appendix 2 – Further Information about the school

ROUTINES AND GENERAL INFORMATION: Primary Level

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.

Appendix 3 – Relevant School Policies

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.

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, Enable Ireland teams 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.

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.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The school's code of behaviour mentioned above in Section 5 of the Admissions and Participation policy above is available on the schools' website.

Appendix 4

The catchment area catered for by the school is 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 Dublin Co.	Dun Laoghaire and Rathdown

Co. Wicklow

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