BALLA N.S.

Balla National School
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**Admission Policy of Balla National School**
**Roll number:**
**17119T**
School Patron: Archbishop of Tuam

## 1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the Board of Management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school. The policy was approved by the school patron on 15th June 2020 .It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it. The relevant dates and timelines for Balla NS admission process is set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned. The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

## 2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Balla N.S. is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Tuam. "Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting: the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and a living relationship with God and with other people; and a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and the formation of the students in the Catholic faith, and which school provides religious education for the students in accordance with the doctrines, practises and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos

and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Balla N.S. shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

**Ethos of Balla N.S.**

The 'ethos' of Balla N.S. encompasses collective attitudes, beliefs, core values, traditions, aspirations and goals. These are reflected in the actual practises which are carried out in the school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. While it is impossible to outline all aspects of the school 'ethos', the following characteristics are experienced and promoted as essential elements in the establishment of a supportive and positive 'ethos'.

- In Balla N.S., where the ethos is that of a Christian Catholic school, religious instruction, in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church, is part of the education given to children who belong to that Church.
- The students are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, in accordance with arrangements in the diocese.
- Prayer is a feature of the school day.
- The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, including his / her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.
- The Principal and teaching staff aim at maintaining high professional standards and creating a safe and happy environment.
- A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Students are drawn by example and taught to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities.
- Close contact is maintained between school and home. Parents / guardians and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another in leading the children to the fullness of their potential at the different stages.
- The ancillary staff in the school are highly esteemed and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education.
- Mission Statement Balla N.S. is a Roman Catholic School (established in connection with the Minister for Education) which aims at promoting the

full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual.

- Balla N.S.provides Religious Education for the students in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the Catholic Faith. The school also recognises the right of students to other beliefs and practices.

3. **Admission Statement Balla N.S.**

- will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:
- the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- or the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

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

**All denominational schools**

Balla N.S. is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

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

Balla N.S. with the Approval of the Minister for Education & Skills has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

*Note for schools: The act does not require schools and special classes providing for a category or categories of special educational needs to change their current status. The current arrangements in relation to the category or categories of special educational needs provided by schools will continue as in previous years unless otherwise directed by the NCSE or the Department of Education.*

## 5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

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

· Balla N.S. is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Roman Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

· *The special classes attached to Balla N.S. provides an education exclusively for students with Autism and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class, and a recommendation by relevant professionals for special class placement.*

## 6. Oversubscription.

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

1. Children who are four years of age (though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years) on/before April 1st who have siblings including step siblings currently enrolled in the school (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, older children will have precedence.)
2. Children who are four years of age (though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years) on/before April 1st and who live within the immediate local area of the school. Evidence of residency will be requested in the form of a recent utility bill . (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, older children will have precedence.)
3. Children who are four years of age (though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years) on/before April 1st whose siblings/step siblings are past students of the school.(If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, older children will have precedence.)
4. Children who are four years of age (though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years) on/before the April 1st whose parents or grandparents attended the school up to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).(If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, older children will have precedence.)
5. Children not in the above named categories and who are four years of age (though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of 6 years) on/before April 1st. (If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, older children will have precedence.)
6. In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply: If the applications within categories exceed the number of places available, older children will have precedence. If, in the event that one place is available and the next two children are twins both will be taken.

## Selection Criteria – Special Class/Autism Class

1. Children with a diagnosis of Autism and who are currently enrolled in the school.

2. Children with a diagnosis of Autism and who have siblings currently enrolled in the school.

3. Children with a diagnosis of autism and who qualify as resident for the purposes of this Admission Policy within the Parish of Balla.

*a. Note: Two of following documents dated within three months of the date of application must be supplied as proof of address: Bank Statement, Utility bill, e.g. electricity, or water.*

4. Children with a diagnosis of autism and who are not included within any of the preceding categories and whose parent is a member of the staff of the school. Priority to the eldest.

5. Children with a diagnosis of Autism and who are not included within categories 1-4 and have a recommendation for a special class placement on a relevant psychological report.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above, (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply: The board of management will apply the five selection criteria in the order of priority in which they are listed. In the event of a tie for the final place, the board will then determine the access to the final place by choosing the eldest of the tied applicants. In the event of more than one tied applicant having the same date of birth, the board will draw lots between these tied applicants for the last place. Any remaining applicant will be kept on a waiting list for the school year in which admission is being sought.

**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 student's prior attendance at a preschool or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
- the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
- the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
- the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

*This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned. Late applications will affect enrolment if the school is oversubscribed. This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists.*

**8. Decisions on applications:**

All decisions on applications for admission to Balla N.S. will be based on the following:

1. Our school's admission policy .

2. The school's annual admission notice (where applicable).

3. The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications (Please see section 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.)

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

**9. Notifying applicants of decisions:**

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

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

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

In accepting an offer of admission from Balla N.S., 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
(ii) whether or not you have applied for and are 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 Balla N.S. where –

1. it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
2. 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
3. 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;
4. or an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 10 above.

1**2. Sharing of Data with other schools:**

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

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—
(i) an application for admission to the school has been received,

(ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or

(iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.

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

**13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription:**

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

Placement on the waiting list of Balla N.S. 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.

Applicants whose applications are received after the closing date, outlined in the Annual Admission Notice, will be placed at the end of the waiting list in order of the date and time of receipt of the application and in accordance with the school's selection criteria.

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.

**14. Late Applications**
All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

An application received by Balla N.S. after the closing date published by the school, and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Where Balla N.S. is not oversubscribed and it receives a late application, the Student seeking admission will receive an offer of a place within the school, subject to the same process as applied to Applicants whose applications were received before the closing date.

Where Balla N.S. is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, that application will receive a place on the waiting list.
Applicants whose applications were received by the school before the closing date for applications.

Such late applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the school and subsequently the school's selection criteria will be applied in accordance with this Admission Policy.

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

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

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:
Balla N.S. wishes to state that it is preferred that students may only be admitted in the school from the end August/ 1st September to the 30th September of the same year. The first day back in the new school term is the preferred date of admission.

Students wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules governing National Schools, available spaces, subject to the admission policy of the school and either with approval of the Department of Education & Skills or when a transfer is made because of a change of the ordinary residence of the child. Such applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

The transfer policy is that except in very extreme and unusual circumstances students may only transfer to this school during the month of September.

Whilst recognising the right of parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, Balla N.S.is also responsible to 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 all children. Assisting the school in such circumstances, Balla N.S.reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind:

1. size of / available space in classrooms

2. Multi-grade classes.

3. DES maximum class average directives (currently a maximum average of 26 children)

Balla N.S.reserves the right to refuse admission in exceptional circumstances where it feels,

1. Where the school is oversubscribed
2. Parents refuse to accept and sign up to the school's Code of Behaviour

Note: A pupil who leaves the school and who is struck off the Rolla/POD, and who subsequently wishes to return to the school must reapply to the school in writing.

Parents/guardians who request a school place will be given an enrolment policy and an enrolment form. When the enrolment form has been received by the school, the parent/guardian will be informed if there is a place available.

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

The board of Balla N.S. or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

(a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or

(b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

**17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction:**

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parent(s) who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students: A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) of the student to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school. Written requests by parents/guardians will be considered on a case by case basis.

**18. Reviews/Appeals: Review of decisions by the Board of Management**

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.

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

Note: Where 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 within fourteen days of the applicant receiving from Balla N.S. the letter of refusal to enrol, prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.**

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

**Right of appeal**

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

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

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

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

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

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills. The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and 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.

This policy will be reviewed as necessary in light of experience.

Signed  Chairperson

Date 20th October 2026