

Admission Policy of Boyne Community School

School Address: Dublin Road, Trim, Co. Meath.
C15 RK79

Roll number: 91508C

School Patrons: The Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Meath and LMETB.

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 patrons and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patrons on [date]. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request.

The relevant dates and timelines for Boyne Community School's admission process are set out in its Annual Admission Notice which is published 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.

2. Characteristic Spirit and General Objectives of the School

Boyne Community School is a co-educational multi-denominational post-primary school under the joint patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Meath and LMETB. Boyne Community School provides a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the local community. An innovative approach to delivery of a wide-ranging curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral, mental, physical and social well-being of students within our community. Boyne Community School also provides for life-long learning within our local community through the provision of adult education programmes.

Our school was established under the Deed of Trust and opened in 2001. It is an amalgamation of St. Michael's Diocesan and Trim Vocational Schools. The values of LMETB as a multi-denominational State Body and the inherited traditions, Christian values and founding intentions of the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Meath are enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school and are respected and cherished.

Boyne Community School aims, with the resources available, to provide the best possible environment in order to cater for the cultural, educational, moral, physical, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions of all students. We make every effort to ensure that the

uniqueness and dignity of each person is respected, especially through the pastoral care system in the school. We realise too that we must cater for the changing needs of today's world; and towards that end, we frequently review our various programmes.

Working together as a school community, the Board of Management, parents/guardians, staff and students aim to provide an environment which will allow each student to develop intellectually, physically, morally, socially and spiritually so as they will be able to fulfil their role in society.

Within the context of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes, the rights of the Patrons and the Board of Management as set out in the Education Act 1998 (Section 15-(1), - (2)), and the funding and resources available, the school supports the following principles: -

- Inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of students with a disability or
- other special needs.
- Equality with respect to maximum access and participation in the school.
- Parental choice in relation to selection of school, having regard for the characteristic spirit of the school.
- Respect for the diversity of beliefs, languages, traditions and ways of life in society.

Our values are reflected in how we live as a school community. The unique and intrinsic value of each member of the school community is recognised and respected. All are treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability, disability or socio-economic status. All students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018) construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Once enrolled, Boyne Community School provides all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum, school life and the local community. Boyne Community School provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable students to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, culture or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values with a view to contributing to a just and fairer society.

Our school is multi-denominational where we welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.

In Boyne Community School, we celebrate the partnership, collaboration and empathy which nurtures and develops our young people in a community where the essence of our ethos is care and respect for self, others and our environment.

Mission Statement

Boyne Community school aspires to become a community focused on learning, which respects differences and upholds the dignity and rights of each person. We are committed to fostering the academic, personal, social, spiritual, moral and physical development of each individual.

3. Admission Statement

Boyne Community School will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

- (a) the gender of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned;
- (b) the civil status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned;
- (c) the family status of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned;
- (d) the sexual orientation of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned;
- (e) the religion of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned;
- (f) the disability of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned;
- (g) the race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned;
- (h) the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned being a member of the Traveller Community;
and/ or
- (i) 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.

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

In welcoming applications from students with special educational needs, the school will use the resources, both financial and personal, provided by the Department of Education and Skills, to make reasonable provision and accommodation for all such students and will ensure that these students are free to participate in the life of the school in so far as is reasonably practicable. While recognizing and fully supporting parents'/guardians' rights to have a school of their choice for their children, the school's ability to accept students with particular needs is dependent on the supply of resources, suitable to the needs of the individual student, being supplied by the Department of Education and Skills, and on their eligibility for admission.

Boyne Community School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with a psychological report confirming a diagnosis of Autism. The report must also contain a clear recommendation for the student to be in an ASD unit.

The general school admissions policy applies to applicants for a place in Cuan Slán, our ASD unit. Cuan Slán provides an education exclusively for students who fall within the **Borderline/ Mild General Disability Range**. The school may refuse to admit to the unit a student who does not have this category of need. As this Autism class is attached to a mainstream school, there is an inherent assumption that children who apply for a place have consistent experience in non-specialist mainstream classes in primary school. It is therefore an essential requirement that students in the Autism class are able to be integrated into mainstream classes.

5. Admission of Students

The school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) student has not reached the required age of 12 on the 1st of January in the calendar year following the child's entry into First Year;
- b) student has not completed Sixth Class in Primary School or equivalent level of education abroad;
- c) the school is oversubscribed (see Section 6 below for further detail);
- d) 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; and/or
- e) the applicant to Cuan Slán does not fulfill the criteria outlined in Section 4.

6. Oversubscription

In the event of oversubscription, 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. Applicants who have a sibling currently attending Boyne Community School.
2. Applicants who reside within the catchment area (as defined by the Board of Management) **AND** who attend one of the school's designated feeder primary schools.
3. Applicants whose parent or legal guardian is a full time member of staff in the school.
4. Applicants resident within the defined catchment area, but attending a primary school which is not one of the designated feeder primary schools.
5. Applicants who attend one of the schools designated feeder schools but reside outside the defined catchment area.

Please note that applications made by siblings for a place in 1st year will be treated as one application.

The mechanism for the establishment of a list will be a Board of Management administered lottery. Separate lottery draws will be conducted for each of the criteria above.

If places become available, they will be allocated to applicants as per the order listed above, e.g. Criterion 1, then Criterion 2, then Criterion 3, then Criterion 4, then Criterion 5. This draw will remain active for the entire school year.

Note: Siblings in this context also include step siblings.

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 for admission to Cuan Slán);
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents/guardians;
- (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, 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.

8. Decisions on Applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Boyne Community School will be based on the following:

- Our school's Admission Policy
- The school's Annual Admission Notice (where applicable); and
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our Annual Admission Notice for receiving applications

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

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

9. Notifying Applicants of Decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice.

If an applicant is not offered a place in our school, the reason(s) why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the applicant's ranking against the selection criteria and details of their 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 Boyne Community School, parents/guardians must indicate:

(i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission from 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 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 Boyne Community School where:

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading;
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the Annual Admission Notice of the school;
- (iii) the parent/guardian of an applicant, 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 them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the applicant; and/ or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in Section 10 above.

12. Sharing of Data with other Schools

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

13. Waiting List in the Event of Oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available in the school, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Boyne Community School 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 for admission to Boyne Community School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with Section 6 of 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.

14. Late Applications

Late applications will only be considered after all other applications have been processed as outlined in Section 6.

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.

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:

Transfer of a student from another school

The school will make every reasonable effort to facilitate a student seeking a transfer to the school. Students wishing to transfer should provide the following-

- A completed application form; and
- Copies of last two reports

On submission and receipt of this information, the Board of Management will decide on applications for admission to any year other than First Year by applying the following criteria:

1. The applicant fulfilling the conditions outlined in the Admissions Policy;
2. A place being available in a Curricular programme;
3. Consultation with the Education Welfare Officer (if appropriate);

and

4. That the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child. Such acceptance of the Code of Behaviour will be requested at the beginning of each subsequent school year.

The transfer of students **will not** be considered after the 30th of September in any given academic year, except in exceptional circumstances.

Applications for Specific Programmes / Subjects (or subjects at a specific level)

The following criteria will apply for acceptance to specific subjects/programmes, such as TY, LCVP and LCA:

- Behavioural record
- Attendance record
- Performance in subject previously
- Student's commitment to the programme
- Student's participation in all aspects of the programme

In relation to the above courses, an application process will apply. The Board of Management will be the final arbiter of who enters any of the programmes listed above.

Admission to Repeat the Leaving Certificate Programme or to Repeat a Year:

Boyne Community School does not operate a separate Repeat Leaving Certificate programme. Students who are offered a place to repeat the Leaving Certificate can only be accommodated in the Sixth Year group and must be in a position to attend classes for a minimum of six subjects.

Places for students who apply to repeat the Leaving Certificate or to repeat a year will be considered in the following context:

- Availability of places in the relevant subject areas;
- DES guidelines regarding Repeat Leaving Cert/Repeat Year in schools;
- The overall enrolment in the school;
- Previous record of applicant – academic record, attendance etc.;
- A student seeking to repeat the Leaving Certificate will not be in a position to take up subjects not studied in their original Leaving Certificate year; and
- Priority will be given to students from Boyne Community School for places to repeat the Leaving Certificate. This being so, final decisions on places cannot be made until after the Leaving Certificate results have been issued in August in any given year.

16. Declaration in Relation to the Non-Charging of Fees

This rule applies to all schools.

The Board of Management of Boyne Community School, or any person(s) 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

Boyne Community School offers *religious education* in all year groups as it promotes the holistic development of students and can contribute positively to their wellbeing in line with the principles of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Frameworks and in the spirit of the Deed of Trust. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual values and moral development of students and encourages respect for all members of our school communities. In addition, religious education supports the ‘multi-denominational’ aspect of our school’s ethos as it provides opportunities for students to engage with questions around their own religious or non-religious beliefs and those of their peers.

In this context it is important to understand the distinction between ‘*religious education*’ and ‘*religious instruction*’:

- Religious education is open to all pupils regardless of their commitment to any particular religion or worldview. It seeks to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all students equally.
- Religious instruction is instruction in accordance with the rites, practices and teachings of a particular religion or denomination for pupils of that religious tradition.

Given that Religious Education, as distinct from Religious Instruction, is timetabled across our school at all levels the legal requirement to advise of the option to opt-out of religious instruction does not arise.

18. Reviews/Appeals

Review of Decisions by the Board of Management

The parent/guardian of an applicant, (or in the case of an applicant who has reached the age of 18 years, the applicant), may request the Board of Management 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 of Management 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 prior to making an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where an applicant has been refused admission for a reason(s) 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/guardian of the applicant, (or in the case of an applicant who has reached the age of 18 years, the applicant), 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 for 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 was ratified by the Board of Management on 24th September 2020.