

# BELLURGAN NATIONAL SCHOOL

*Principal: Mr. Dermot McCoy.*

*Bellurgan,  
Co. Louth.*



*Roll No.  
16249E*

## **Admission Policy of Bellurgan National School**

### **School Address:**

New Road, Bellurgan, Dundalk, County Louth. A91N288

### **Roll number:**

16249E

### **School Patron/s:**

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Catholic Bishop of the Armagh Diocese

### **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 16/08/2020. 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 Bellurgan National 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.

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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**

Bellurgan National School, Jenkinstown, Dundalk, Co. Louth ( 042 9371479) is a co-educational primary school with a Catholic Ethos under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Armagh.

“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:

- a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices 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 Bellurgan National School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so 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.

### **Mission Statement**

Bellurgan National School is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school, which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While it is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions. Bellurgan National School will strive to

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promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes. Bellurgan National School will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in other activities and community events. Bellurgan National School will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils, respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible. Bellurgan National School will promote gender equity amongst the teachers and pupils. Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt.

The school mission statement can be encapsulated by the words: **Truth and Respect**

Children enrolled in **Bellurgan National School** are required to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies. Parents/Guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child/children co-operate with these policies in an age-appropriate way.

**Bellurgan National School** operates under the Rules for National Schools and Departmental Circulars and is funded by grants and teachers resourced by the Department of Education and Science. The school is subject to The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) and all relevant equality legislation.

### 3. Admission Statement

**Bellurgan National School** will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (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,

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- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

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

- **Bellurgan National School** 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.
- **Bellurgan National School** is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for ASD (Autist Spectrum Disorder) students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.
- **Bellurgan N.S.** will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 relating to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.
- **Bellurgan N.S.** will comply with any direction served on the patron or the board, as the case may be, under section 37A and any direction served on the board under section 67(4B) of the Education Act.

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

Bellurgan National School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established two classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism (ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder).

## **5. Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see [section 6](#) below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student.
- c) Bellurgan National School is a Roman Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of Roman Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.
- d) The special classes attached to Bellurgan National School provides an education exclusively for students with Autism (ASD) 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.

## **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:

### **Selection Criteria Mainstream**

In the event of the number of children seeking enrolment in any given class/standard exceeding the number of places available the following criteria, in the order set out, will be used to prioritise children for enrolment:

- 1. Pupils must be four years of age before the start of the School Year.**

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2. **All other applicants living within the parish shall be considered.**
3. **Siblings (including step-siblings resident at the same address) of children already attending the school.**
4. **Children of past pupils of the school.**
5. **Children of current Bellurgan N.S. staff.**
6. **Children of grandparents who are past pupils of the school.**
7. **All children who live outside the parish boundaries.**

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: **Priority given to those who live closest to the school, shortest distance by road on Google Maps.**

## **Enrolment of Children with Special Needs in Mainstream**

On enrolment of children with special needs the Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report or where such a report is not available, will request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required.

Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will request the Special Education Needs Organiser (NCSE see Circular 01/05) to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/or medical report. These resources may include for example, access to or the provision of any or a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, Special Education Teacher lessons, special needs assistant, specialised equipment or furniture or other.

## **Enrolment Criteria in our ASD Class:**

Our School currently has two ASD Classes (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Class. At present we can only cater for 12 pupils on the Autistic Spectrum, six pupils in each class. This school policy has

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regard to and is contingent on the funding, resources, services and space available to our school in the future.

Registration process begins with a referral from the SENO, Early Intervention Team, a telephone call or a visit from the parents. Applications, incorporating date of application, date of birth, address and telephone numbers are entered in the Applications file. Applications will only be processed on the basis of a diagnostic report, a copy of which must be given to the school. Once this process has been completed the applicant secures a place on the list of applicants to enrol.

Following the closing date for applications (28<sup>th</sup> February at 12pm noon), the list of applicants will be reviewed by the Board of Management. Factors taken into consideration are:

1. Diagnosis- Child must be diagnosed as being on the ASD. spectrum with a recommendation for placement in a special class attached to mainstream.
2. Integration-Child must be capable of integrating into mainstream, even at a minimal level, at an appropriate age level.
3. Appropriateness-Child must be capable of accessing the Primary School curriculum

Once the BOM are happy that the child presents as fulfilling the above, places will be allocated in accordance with the criteria below.

## **Selection Criteria for ASD Class:**

The maximum class size is six pupils. If the number of eligible children on the list of applicants to enrol exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will apply in priority order, beginning with number one, once a definite diagnosis of Autism has been provided by a qualified professional.

1. **Pupils currently enrolled in our mainstream school and seeking to transfer to the ASD. Class.**

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2. **Siblings (including step-siblings resident at the same address) of children already attending the school. Please note that the sibling must be attending our school for at least one school year.**
3. **Children living within the parish.**
4. **Children of past pupils.**
5. **Children of current Bellurgan N.S staff.**
6. **Children of grandparents who are past pupils of the school.**
7. **Children living outside the Parish**

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: **Priority given those who live closest to the school, shortest distance by road on Google Maps.**

**The first year of a child's placement in our ASD Class will be used to:**

- Assess the child's educational needs.
- Develop a Pupil Support Plan to address identified needs.
- Assess whether the child's placement is appropriate.

## **Aim and Objectives**

- To provide a quality driven, appropriate educational service to all children in the ASD Class, within the requirements of all recent legislation pertaining to Special Needs Education.
- To strive towards the integration of children in the class into mainstream education, having regard for levels of disability, available resources and suitability for such integration.
- To enhance the communicative and social skills of the children in the ASD class.

## **ASD Class Discharge Policy**

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It is school policy to facilitate the discharge of pupils from the class once they have completed 6<sup>th</sup> class and/or reached the age of twelve after September 30<sup>th</sup> in any year. Discharge may also be recommended if the BOM, after consultation with the parents/guardian, feel that placement is not appropriate or if the child's challenging behaviour poses a significant risk to health and safety in the school – both that of the pupil him/herself, other pupils or the school staff.

Discharge from the class may also happen if a pupil is fully integrated into the mainstream school. A pupil's place in our ASD class is reviewed annually. Integration into mainstream takes place under a 'stepping stones' approach – gradually built up over time, taking into consideration the child's ability to cope on a holistic level – socially, emotionally, physically, mentally, academically.

## **8. 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,  
*other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at—*
  - (I) an early intervention class, or
  - (II) an early start pre-school, specified in a list published by the Minister from time to time;
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;  
*(other than in relation to:*

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- admission to (a) a special school or (b) a special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs concerned and/or
- (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;  
(other than, in the case of the school wishing to include a selection criteria based on (1) siblings of a student attending or having attended the school and/or (2) parents or grandparents of a student having attended the school.

In relation to (2) parents and grandparents having attended, a school may only apply this criteria to a maximum of 25% of the available spaces as set out in the school's annual admission notice).

- (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.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists (up until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 only).

## 9. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to **Bellurgan National School** will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy

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

## **10. 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).

## **11. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from Bellurgan 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 and

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(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.

## **12. 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 Bellurgan National 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 of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in [section 10](#) above.

## **13. 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:

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- (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).

## **14. 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 **Bellurgan National 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 of Bellurgan National School 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 of receipt of the application.

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.

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## **15. Late Applications**

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

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is 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.

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

Pupils wishing to transfer from other schools are enrolled subject to the Rules governing National Schools and to

- 1. The school's Admission Policy.**
- 2. The school being satisfied with the reasons for the transfer.**
- 3. The school regarding the move to be in the best interests of the pupil.**
- 4. Available space.**

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:

- Application forms are available from the school office and for download from the school website**
- Failure to fully complete forms and sign Code of Behaviour may result in refusal to admit the applicant. See Section 5 (b) above**
- The behaviour record of a student in their previous school shall be considered**
- The attendance record of a student in their previous school shall be considered**

The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for available places for students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group.

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- 1. All other applicants living within the parish shall be considered.**
- 2. Siblings (including step-siblings resident at the same address) of children already attending the school.**
- 3. Children of past pupils of the school.**
- 4. Children of current Bellurgan N.S. staff.**
- 5. All children who live outside the parish boundaries.**

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: **Priority given to those who live closest to the school, shortest distance by road on Google Maps.**

Enrolment requests throughout the school year will be brought before the next scheduled Board of Management meeting. Pupils who meet the above criteria will only commence school at the beginning of the next school term. Exception for pupils who have relocated into the parish from an outside area during a school term

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

- Application forms are available from the school office and for download from the school website**
- Failure to fully complete forms and sign Code of Behaviour may result in refusal to admit the applicant. See Section 5 (b) above**
- The behaviour record of a student in their previous school shall be considered**
- The attendance record of a student in their previous school shall be considered**

The following criteria will be applied if there is a surplus of applications for available places for students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group.

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6. All other applicants living within the parish shall be considered.
7. Siblings (including step-siblings resident at the same address) of children already attending the school.
8. Children of past pupils of the school.
9. Children of current Bellurgan N.S. staff.
10. All children who live outside the parish boundaries.

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: **Priority given those who live closest to the school, shortest distance by road on Google Maps.**

Enrolment requests throughout the school year will be brought before the next scheduled Board of Management meeting. Pupils who meet the above criteria will only commence school at the beginning of the next school term. Exception for pupils who have relocated into the parish from an outside area during a school term

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

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of **Bellurgan National 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 enrolment of a student in the school.

## **18. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, 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:

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A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

## 19. **Reviews/appeals**

### **Review of decisions by the board of Management**

The parent of the student, or in the case of a 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 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 of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

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

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

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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.

## **Ratification and Communication**

This policy will be in operation from the school year 2022/2023, having been ratified by Staff and BOM. Every teacher will be provided with a copy of this policy for their files.

**Signed on Behalf of the Board of Management:**

**Chairperson: Mr Jimmy Hughes**

**Principal: Mr Dermot McCoy**

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