Admission Policy of Blessington Educate Together N.S.

School Address: Red Lane, Blessington, Co. Wicklow

Roll number: 20242M

School Patron: Educate Together

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 16th September 2025. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, upon request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for Blessington Educate Together N.S. 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. 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

Educate Together schools are committed to the values set out in Educate Together's Charter. Our schools are learner-centred, equality-based, co educational and democratically-run. This means that all members of the school community, whatever their social, cultural or belief background, work together in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Students follow an Ethical Education curriculum, learning about morality and spirituality; equality and justice; belief systems and an ethical approach to the environment. This teaches students about different belief systems as well as atheism, agnosticism and humanism, without promoting any one worldview over another. Our equality-based ethos informs all policies and practices in the daily life of the school. In exercising its policy-making and decision-making responsibilities, the school's manager/board of management upholds the characteristic spirit of the school.

Educate Together schools provide for equality of access and a child / learner-centred approach in line with the Educate Together Charter. They prioritise offering places to siblings of children in the school at the same time.

The definition of a sibling in this policy includes stepsiblings and foster siblings who are enrolled in the school at the same time.

3. Admission Statement

Blessington Educate Together N.S. will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following grounds:

a. sex or gender of the student or applicant,
b. civil status of the applicant,
c. family status of the student or applicant,
d. sexual orientation of the student or applicant,
e. religion of the student or applicant,
f. disability of the student or applicant,
g. race of the student or applicant,
h. the student or applicant's membership of the Traveller community,
i. the student or applicant in respect of the student/applicant concerned having special educational needs. However, because Blessington Educate Together N.S. is a school which has established autism classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education, which provide(s) an education exclusively for students with a category/categories of additional ("special") educational needs specified by the Minister, Blessington Educate Together N.S. may refuse to admit a student to these class(es) where the student concerned does not meet the criteria for admission to such a class, see section 4 below.

These grounds are as per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998.

Blessington Educate Together N.S. will cooperate with the National Council for Special Education (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 additional ("special") educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a specialised class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

Blessington Educate Together N.S. will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018.

4. Categories of Additional ("Special") Educational Needs catered for in the School's Autism Classes

Blessington Educate Together N.S., with the approval of the Minister for Education, has established autism classes to provide an education exclusively for autistic students / students with autism.

Children and young people are eligible for enrolment in a special class for autistic students / students with autism when the following is provided in support of such an application:

Professional report(s) outlining:

Diagnosis of special educational needs (*e.g. Autism: DSM IV/V or ICD 10/11*

(psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)

AND

A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports

AND

Given the severity or complexity of the child's support needs, a clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same

AND

A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autistic students / students with autism.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where:

a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 7 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 them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student (visit the school's website www.betns.ie to read the Code of Behaviour).

c) The Birch and Hazel classes in Blessington Educate Together N.S., provide an education exclusively for autistic students and the school may refuse admission to these classes where the student concerned does not meet the criteria for admission to such a class as set out in section 4 above.

6. 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: admission to a class for autistic students / students with autism insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student meets the eligibility criteria for such a class.

(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 siblings of students who are enrolled in the school at the same time;

(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.

7. Oversubscription

a) Junior Infants

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 for Junior Infants.

Priority Category 1:
Applicant students who are siblings of children enrolled in the school at the same time and who will have turned 4 by 31st March of the year prior to the school year concerned

Priority Category 2:
Applicant students who will have turned 4 by 31st March of the year prior to the school year concerned

Priority Category 3:
All other applicants

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), places will be offered or added to a waiting list to the pupil with the earlier date of birth.

b) Autism Classes

If the school's autism classes are oversubscribed, the school will apply the following selection criteria to students. These will be applied in the order listed below to applications received within the timeline as set out in the school's annual admission notice for Blessington Educate Together's autism classes. Applications under any of the priority categories listed below must meet the eligibility criteria for these classes, as outlined in section 4 above.

Priority Category 1:
Applicants who are siblings of children born, on or before 31st March, and enrolled in the school at the same time.

Priority Category 2:
Applicants, who have reached four, born, on or before 31st March, of the year prior to the school year concerned (taking into account of the two years of the ECCE Scheme)

Priority Category 3:
All other applicants.

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), places will be offered or added to a waiting list to the pupil with the earlier date of birth.

c. Other year groups – Senior Infants to Sixth Class

If the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below. It will be applied to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice for other year groups. Students must be moving to the next year group if the application is for September or to the same year if applying to move during the school year:

Priority Category 1:
Applicants who are siblings of children enrolled in the school at the same time.

Priority Category 2:
All other applicants.

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), places will be offered or added to a waiting list to the pupil with the earlier date of birth.

8. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice for Junior Infants, autism classes or to other year groups will be considered and decided upon in date order of when they were received 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 not 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 the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list.

If two applications are received at the same time the applicant will be offered a place or placed on the waiting list by who has the earliest date of birth.

9. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available in Junior Infants, autism classes or other year groups, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Blessington Educate Together N.S. 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 Blessington Educate Together 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; see section 7 above. Late applications will be added to the list in date order; see section 8 above.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available before 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.

Waiting lists will expire at the end of each school year.

10. Admissions of students after the commencement of the school year

If a place is available after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, the place will be offered to the next place on the waiting list if there is one or to the next application.

11. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to Blessington Educate Together N.S. 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 received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications.

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.

12. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school within the timeline outlined in the relevant annual admissions notice, but no later than three weeks after the annual admissions process or, for late applications, three weeks after the school receives an application.

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 or class concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 17 below for further details).

13. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from Blessington Educate Together 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

(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.

14. 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 Blessington Educate Together N.S. 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 them and that they 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 13 above.

15. Sharing of Data

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 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 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 their name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005)

This data may be further shared with the Department of Education for further processing to facilitate the efficient admission of students. This is in accordance with the Minister for Education's statutory function to plan and co-ordinate the provision of education in schools.

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

The board of Blessington Educate Together 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. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, 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.

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 within 21 calendar days of the date** 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 within 21 calendar days of the date** 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 to 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.

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.

More information on appeals can be found here.

18. Data Protection.

The school acknowledges its obligations as a data controller under the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Information obtained for the purposes of allocating places in the school to students will only be used and disclosed in a manner which is compatible with this purpose. Only such personal data as are relevant and necessary for the performance of this function will be retained. The school undertakes to ensure that such information is processed fairly, that it is kept safe, secure, accurate, complete, and up to date. Individuals have the right to have any inaccurate information rectified or erased. All data submitted as part of the admissions process will be destroyed within twelve months of the end of the school year the application is for (as opposed to the receipt of the application). A copy of all personal data obtained and kept as part of the admissions process will be made available to the subject of such data on receipt of a written request to the chairperson of the board of management.