

BALLYCLARE HIGH SCHOOL

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**Controlled Grammar School
(Non-denominational)**

Age Range of pupils: 11-18

Admissions Number: 186

Enrolment Number: 1210

Principal: Dr M Rainey, BSc (Hons) PhD PGCE PQH (NI)

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Dr R McMillen, MPhil, MB, FRCOG

Open Night

**The School will be open to welcome parents and prospective pupils on Thursday 8th January 2026.
The Principal will speak at 6.30pm and 8pm**

Parents/Carers are advised to record the Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) awarded by the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG), together with the SEAG Unique Pupil Number, on the Transfer Application. They should also upload the original Statement of Outcome received from SEAG, indicating their child's SEAG Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) with the Transfer Application.

- SEAG is very clear that its Entrance Assessment consists of two papers. A pupil who only takes one paper (ie. either Paper 1 or Paper 2, but not both) will not have completed the full Entrance Assessment. Such pupils will, however, have their "single paper" marked and will receive a Statement of Outcomes. Outcomes for pupils who only sit one paper will have the designation "e" (for estimate) immediately after the Outcome, eg. TSAS 196e; Band 4e. Such pupils may be considered for admission by Ballyclare High School under Special Provisions.
- Parents/Carers who wish to apply to the School under Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions should complete SC Form and/or SP Form, obtainable from the School, and attach it with appropriate documentation described in section 2.
- Parents/Carers should note that they will be required to produce documents verifying information pertinent to the School's Admissions Criteria. If they are not uploaded with the Transfer Application, as detailed below, they will be requested after they have been notified of the offer of a place at the School.

1. ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY INTO YEAR 8

Respective functions of the Board of Governors and Principal in relation to Admissions to the School

In the event of the School being oversubscribed the Board of Governors has approved the criteria for admission described below and the task of applying these criteria, in order, has been delegated to the School Improvement Committee of the Board of Governors in conjunction with the Principal. Decision-making powers have been delegated to the School Improvement Committee and it will also consider Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions.

When applying the criteria during the admissions procedure, punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on 27th January 2026 at 12 noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 19th February 2026 at 12 noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12 noon (GMT) on 19th February 2026 and up to 4.00pm on 24th February 2026 will be treated as a late application.

Applications for those pupils who have sat the SEAG Entrance Assessments, will be considered irrespective of the order of preference of schools they have expressed. The first criterion for selection for a place in Year 8 at Ballyclare High School will be the pupil's Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) provided by the SEAG. Consideration will also be given to those pupils claiming Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions as defined below in section 2.

Whilst Ballyclare High School does not use preference as part of its criteria for admission, it is important to note how such preference may affect the general admission process to a post primary school. All applications for admission will be considered in the first instance by the post primary school listed as first preference and should the applicant be successful in gaining entrance to that school, they will not be considered by the schools listed as second preference and so on. However, should an applicant be unsuccessful in gaining entrance to a school of higher preference and thereby come forward for entrance to Ballyclare High School, the criteria will be applied to the applicant. He/she will be ranked in the first instance by the SEAG TSAS alongside all other applicants irrespective of preference.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the School Improvement Committee will **only** take into account information which is detailed on or uploaded with the Transfer Application, including the TSAS provided by the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG) (or the score assigned as a result of consideration of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions). It is the responsibility of parents/carers to make sure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the School's admissions criteria, as outlined below, is stated on or uploaded with the Transfer Application.

All children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the School will be selected for admission before any child not so resident. The child's birth certificate and proof of address should be uploaded with the Transfer Application. Proof of address – any TWO of the following recent (within 6 months of the closing date of application to the School) documents with sensitive information redacted: bank/building society statement; utility bill (e.g. electricity, gas, TV licence, landline telephone); addressed payslip; letter awarding Child Benefit to the child or another letter relating to this benefit; mortgage statement; Land and Property Services Rates Demand; financial statement such as an ISA, pension or endowment; current driving licence; rental agreement.

If the number of applications is greater than the Admissions Number, the following criteria shall be applied in the order listed below until the point where the Admissions Number is complete:

- 1.1 Children who have taken the SEAG Entrance Assessments and been awarded a TSAS (or had a score assigned as a result of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions) will be considered before other children.
- 1.2 The first 186 places will be allocated to pupils on the basis of the rank order of their TSAS (or the score assigned as a result of Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions). Pupils achieving higher scores will be allocated places before those attaining lower scores. Where a number of pupils seeking the 186th place have attained the same score then all such pupils will be admitted up to the School's Admissions Number using the tie-breaker criteria listed in paragraph 1.4 below.
- 1.3 If, following the application of criteria 1.2 above all available places have not been filled the School will then consider for admission any pupils who have not taken the SEAG Entrance Assessments. The tie-breaker criteria listed in paragraph 1.4 below will be used to determine the allocation of the remaining places.
- 1.4 Tie breaker criteria
 - I. Children who have a child of the family[#] enrolled in the School or been accepted for enrolment in 2025;
 - II. Children who are the eldest child or the only child of the family*;
 - III. The age of the child, with preference being given to the eldest child;
 - IV. In the unlikely event of two or more children having the same birthday, rank order will be determined on the basis outlined below:
 - (a) Children will be selected for admission based on the initial letter of the surname as it appears on the birth certificate in the order set out below. This order was determined by random selection.

D O F C Q X A G N P V U Z K M B J Y T E W S I R L H

- (b) Where surnames begin with the same letter, the second and, if necessary, subsequent letters will be used in alphabetical order to establish relative priority for admission.
- (c) Where children have the same surname, the initial letter of the first forename, as it appears on the birth certificate, will be used for admission.
- (d) Where the first forenames begin with the same letter, the second and, if necessary, subsequent letters will be used in alphabetical order to establish relative priority for admission.
- (e) Where no priority can be established by means of this direct alphabetical comparison (e.g. 'Alan' 'Alanna') the child with the shorter first forename will be prioritised for admission.
- (f) Where children have the same first forename the child without any subsequent forename will be prioritised for admission.
- (g) Where the application of (a) to (f) has not permitted priority to be established then (c) and (d) will be repeated with the substitution of 'second forename' for 'first forename'.

Child of the family covers: a child born to a married couple or to a couple in a civil partnership; a child born to a co-habiting couple; a child born to a single parent; a child of either/any of those people by a previous marriage, civil partnership or relationship; a child living with a couple who has been treated as a “child of the family” whether there is a marriage or a civil partnership or not; a child living with an individual, who has been treated as a “child of the family”; an adopted or fostered child; a situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family or individual (as per DENI Circular 2025/12 issued 6th October 2025).

* Twins and other multiples who are eldest in the family are treated as joint eldest children. Eldest ‘child of the family’ includes cases where their next sibling has completed his/her post-primary education, and where the eldest child of the family was in receipt of a statement of special needs or has attended a special school/unit. The School will also include in this category children who have moved to reside within the areas of Belfast City Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council or Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and so are the eldest child eligible to attend Ballyclare High School. Parents/Carers should provide verification with the Transfer Application in the form of a letter. That letter should state how the child is the eldest and that they are known to the verifier. The letter must be written on headed paper and signed by one of the following who is not a member of the applicant’s family: a primary school principal; a medical practitioner; a solicitor; a member of the clergy or equivalent; a police officer.

2. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES/SPECIAL PROVISIONS

The purpose of a claim for Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision is so that a child can be assigned a TSAS equivalent to that which he or she would have obtained in the SEAG Entrance Assessments under normal conditions. Consideration of a claim for Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision consists of two parts: the first requires the consideration of whether there is sufficient material to permit a child to be considered as having special circumstances or attracting special provision, or both. If a child is permitted to be considered as having special circumstances or as attracting special provision or both, the second part of the consideration requires an educational judgement to be made on the totality of the material presented to the School, so that a TSAS equivalent to that which the child would have obtained in the SEAG Entrance Assessments under normal conditions can be assigned.

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to present all such material as they consider will assist the School in performing both parts of the consideration described above. Details of the evidence required are outlined in 2(i) and 2(ii) below. It should be noted by parents/carers that both parts of the consideration referred to involve an exercise in judgement and not precise calculation.

Special Circumstances

Where there are medical or other problems, which may have affected the child’s performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessments and which are supported by documentary evidence, then this evidence will be given consideration by the School Improvement Committee of the Board of Governors. These problems are referred to as ‘Special Circumstances’.

However, where a child has already received special consideration through Special Access Arrangements from SEAG for a medical or other problem the School Improvement Committee of the Board of Governors will take into account the fact that the applicant was granted Special Access Arrangements for those matters.

2i Details of medical or other evidence

Where it is claimed that a pupil’s performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessments has been affected by a medical or other problem it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to set out in the SC Form precise details of the problem and append evidence to corroborate the existence of the problem with the Transfer Application.

Where the problem is a medical one of short-term duration which affected the pupil only at the time of the SEAG Entrance Assessments the School will require evidence that the child was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time of the assessments. Where the problem is of a non-medical nature the parents/carers should append appropriate independent evidence and upload it with the Transfer Application. It should be noted that independent evidence will carry greater weight.

2ii Educational Evidence

Where the application for Special Circumstances is accepted, the School Improvement Committee will assign a TSAS for the child on the basis of the evidence available. Such children will then be considered, with all other applicants who have received a SEAG TSAS, and the admissions criteria will be applied.

In reaching the educational judgement needed to assign the TSAS that a child would have obtained in the SEAG Entrance Assessments under normal circumstances, the School Improvement Committee of the Board of Governors will consider any materials uploaded with the Transfer Application by the parents/carers. This material may include any or all of the following:

- a) The TSAS awarded by SEAG in the Entrance Assessment (if the child sits both SEAG Entrance Assessments) or the TSAS estimated by SEAG (if the child only sits only one of the SEAG Entrance Assessments, due to the child's illness, or other unforeseen circumstances).
- b) The results, where they exist, for the child of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7 and the results in any end of year tests in English and mathematics, conducted in Year 5 and Year 6.
- c) Comparative information from the primary school. This should include the results for other (unnamed) pupils in the applicant's Year 7 class of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7 and the results in any end of year tests in English and mathematics and, where available, the respective SEAG TSAS awarded.
- d) Any other relevant material.

Parents/Carers who wish to apply to the School under Special Circumstances should complete SC Form obtainable from the School website and upload it with appropriate documentary evidence with the Transfer Application.

Special Provisions

Special provisions will apply for:

- a) children whose parents/carers wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland;
- b) children who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland;
- c) children who due to a serious medical issue supported by appropriate documentary evidence or for a demonstrably valid reason also supported by appropriate documentary evidence were either unable to sit the SEAG Entrance Assessment OR have estimated Outcomes from SEAG because they only sat one of the two Entrance Assessment Papers.

Note: It is expected that all those seeking admission should sit the SEAG Entrance Assessments, with the exception of those children who take up residence in Northern Ireland after 17th October 2025.

Parents/Carers who wish to apply to the School under Special Provisions should complete SP Form obtainable from the School website stating the precise reason why they believe the applicant is eligible for consideration under Special Provisions. This should be uploaded along with appropriate documentary evidence, with the Transfer Application. The School Improvement Committee of the Board of Governors will consider the application for Special Provisions. Where the application for Special Provisions is accepted, the following procedure will apply:

- a) The School Improvement Committee of the Board of Governors will consider any accredited assessments, and any assessment information supplied by the child's primary school (see 2ii above);
- b) The School Improvement Committee of the Board of Governors will assign an equivalent TSAS for the applicant. Such children will then be considered, along with all other children who have received a SEAG TSAS and the Admissions Criteria will be applied.

3. WAITING LIST POLICY

Ballyclare High School operates a separate waiting list for Year 8. All applications for admission to Year 8 that were unsuccessful in obtaining a place in the School will be automatically added to the waiting list. Should a place become available between 11th May 2026 and 31st August 2026 then all applicants will be considered including those who applied after 11th May. The applicant with the highest score will be selected. Applicants with the same score will be selected using the tie-breaker criteria in section 1.4. Those applicants who did not sit the SEAG Entrance Assessments will be considered only if a place remains after applicants with a SEAG TSAS (or equivalent as assigned via the Special Circumstances/Special Provisions process) have been considered.

Parents/Carers who wish to have their child considered for admission in the event of a place becoming available after 1st September 2026 should refer to the policy for Admissions Outside the Transfer Procedure.

Should the Board of Governors, or the School Improvement Committee, determine that a child, who has arrived in Northern Ireland after the SEAG Entrance Assessment has concluded, is suitable for a place and the School's Admissions Number has been reached then an additional place will be requested from the Department of Education.

4. RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS/CARERS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that the Transfer Application is completed in full, including the upload of all information relevant to the application of these criteria. They should ensure that the child's birth certificate is uploaded with the Transfer Application as well as two proofs of the child's address and, where applicable, proof that the child is the eldest in the family (as explained in section 1.4).

The Board of Governors reserves the right to reject an application for a place in Year 8 at the School if it becomes aware of:

- (a) any material irregularity in the application made by the applicant to the SEAG in connection with the prescribed test or any falsification of any documents submitted to the SEAG in connection with the prescribed test or
- (b) any material breach of the conditions on the part of the applicant or their parent/carer relating to the prescribed test.

5. VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY APPLICANTS

Applicants should note that the information contained within an application that qualifies the applicant for admission will be verified. The Board of Governors therefore reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any Transfer Application. This information will be requested from successful applicants on or shortly after 11th May 2026 when they have been notified of their allocation of a place at Ballyclare High School. Applicants should also note the provision of false information or incorrect information or the failure to provide verifying documents according to the required deadline may result in either the withdrawal of a place or the inability of the School to offer a place.

Applications and Admissions to Year 8

Year	Admissions Number	Total Applications	Total Admissions
2023/24	188 ⁺	222	189 [*]
2024/25	186	219	186
2025/26**	186	210	189

⁺ includes those admitted through a temporary variation afforded by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

^{*} includes those admitted under appeal or at the direction of the 'Exceptional Circumstances Body'.

****The Total Admissions for year 2025/2026 includes all Year 8 children admitted to the school including those who have a statement of special educational needs and/or may be attending SPiMS.**

(SPiMS = Specialist Provision in Mainstream School)

ADMISSION OUTSIDE OF THE TRANSFER PROCEDURE

In the event of the School being oversubscribed the criteria listed below will be used to select those pupils for whom places may be offered.

Applications should be made in writing using an AP1 form. Those who have applied previously will have their application held open until 1st May of the year of their application, at which time it will be deemed to have lapsed.

All those seeking admission will be required to provide academic reports from their present school.

Preference will be given to applicants when places are available in the year group to which they are applying. Normally the maximum number of places available is 186 in each of Years 9 to 12. In some cases, the number of places is higher because of successful appeals in Year 8 or because of children in receipt of a statement of special needs being admitted into the year group. The task of applying these criteria is delegated to the Principal:

1. Reports from the previous school must satisfy the Principal that attendance (above 90%), behaviour and punctuality are all satisfactory unless documented medical or other evidence provides an acceptable explanation.
2. Children who have applied before 1st June will be considered before other children.
3. Children will be ranked according to their present school report on the basis of 20 marks for attainment, 10 for effort, 10 for disciplinary record and 10 for extra-curricular contribution.

4. If there are more applicants with the same score than places available in a particular year group then the following tie-breaker criteria will be used:
- a. children who have a child of the family[#] currently enrolled at the School;
 - b. the age of the child, preference being given to the oldest child;
 - c. if two or more children have the same birthday then rank order will be determined on the basis of alphabetical order of surname and, if necessary, forenames, as outlined in the published tie-breaker criteria for admission to Year 8.

Preference may be afforded to applicants who have a particular talent to bring to the School.

Please contact the School Office in the first instance if you wish to advance an application for admission.