

# Ballyhaunis

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### PROSPECTUS



*"Intelligence plus character that is the goal of true education"*

Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo | T: 094 9630235 | [www.ballyhauniscs.ie](http://www.ballyhauniscs.ie)



# Word from the Principal

I would like to welcome you to Ballyhaunis Community School's prospectus, which I hope will give you a flavour of our school and the various programmes and courses we offer. Ballyhaunis Community School is a modern, innovative, progressive school fully committed to preparing our students for the demands of the 21st Century. Our school is co-educational and multi-denominational and provides an appropriate education for all students regardless of race, creed or ability. We offer the traditional **Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes, Transition Year (TYP), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Special Needs Support.** We are also particularly proud of our Pastoral Care structures which ensure that students are cared for and nurtured in a kind, supportive environment.

Ballyhaunis Community School's core mission is the provision of a holistic learning environment for all members of the school community. This is achieved by providing a wide range of opportunities for learning both inside and outside the classroom. I hope this prospectus gives you a flavour of the many extra and co-curricular activities the school has on offer as well as giving an overview of our broad and varied curriculum.

Ballyhaunis Community School has served the community for almost 50 years with many of its past pupils achieving both national and international success. We invite you to become part of the next chapter of our story as we face the future with excitement and enthusiasm.

Please browse through our website ([www.ballyhauniscs.ie](http://www.ballyhauniscs.ie)) if you require further information.

**David McDonagh**  
Principal



"A key strength of the school is its committed and hardworking staff, who demonstrate high levels of collegiality and goodwill"

Principal  
*David McDonagh*



Deputy Principal  
*Dríla Macken*



Deputy Principal  
*Patrick McGarry*

## Our Mission Statement

'We in Ballyhaunis Community School are committed to fostering the holistic development of each individual. We aim to promote equality for all and respect for one another and our environment and to give each person the opportunity to reach his/her full potential. While valuing our traditions we encourage innovative curricula to achieve these aims in a safe, caring and ordered manner in a partnership within the school, with parents and the wider community'



## 'A living and learning community'

### History of our School

Ballyhaunis Community School was founded in 1977 when the Mercy Convent, Vocational School and St Patrick's College amalgamated. The Mercy Convent Secondary School opened in 1954 and was located in the grounds of the present St Joseph's Primary School, Bridge St, Ballyhaunis. The Vocational School was located where Manor Brook Housing Estate now stands and was built in 1941. St Patrick's College was on the site of the playing areas at the front of the present school and was opened in 1941. The present Community School caters for all the second level needs of the students in the catchment area and offers a wide curriculum reflecting the traditions of the previous schools.

### DEIS

BCS is among a number of schools nationwide that has been granted DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools) status. DEIS is the Department of Education's initiative to respond to educational disadvantage. The DEIS programme focuses on targeting additional resources to those schools included in the programme to ensure every child has an equal opportunity to achieve their potential. The schools benefit from increased funding, enhanced guidance provision, access to the school completion programme, plus the addition of a home-school community liaison teacher.

### Home School Community Liaison

The HSCL scheme aims to improve educational outcomes for the students most at risk of poor attendance, participation and retention. This is achieved by working with the parents or guardians of students who are experiencing, or are likely to experience, educational disadvantages.

## Focus on our School – DES Inspection Reports

- *'The school is well managed, with effective leadership of staff & students'.*
- *'Student's needs are prioritised in all aspects of educational provision and the school offers a very broad and balanced curriculum'.*
- *'The parent body views the school positively'.*
- *'The school operates an open, inclusive admissions policy and embraces the diversity of the religious backgrounds and cultures of all its students'.*





# Enrolment – 'Nurturing the Individual'

## THE SCHOOL DAY

### 1st, 3rd, 6th Years and LCA2 Students

9.00am – 11.00am	Three 40-minute classes
11.00am – 11.20am	Morning Break
11.20am – 1.20pm	Three 40-minute classes
1.20pm - 2.00pm	Lunch Break
2.00pm - 4.00pm	Three 40-minute classes

### 2nd, 5th Years, LCA1 and TY students

9.00am – 10.20am	Two 40-minute classes
10.20am – 10.40am	Morning Break
10.40am – 12.40pm	Three 40-minute classes
12.40pm – 1.20pm	Lunch Break
1.20pm – 4.00pm	Three 40-minute classes

**School Books:** At Ballyhaunis Community School we operate a book rental scheme. The scheme aims to lessen the financial burden on Parents/Guardians. Parents pay an annual fee for the loan of these books. Book stocks are regularly updated to ensure that students have access to recently published books.

**School Lockers:** All students are provided with lockers to allow them to store their books and equipment. Students have access to lockers before class begins in the morning, at break and lunch times. This reduces the weight of heavy school bags for students.

**ICT:** Each student is issued with a unique school email address and access to secure cloud storage for school and project work.

## School Uniform

**Junior Boys:** Maroon jumper with crest, mid-grey trousers, grey shirt and plain black shoes.

**Junior Girls:** Maroon jumper with crest, plaid skirt, cream blouse, black shoes and black / navy socks. Navy trousers (Arthur's Court model no. 222W) may be worn instead of a skirt.

**Senior Boys, Transition Year /LCA Boys:** Navy blue jumper with crest, mid grey trousers, grey skirt and plain black shoes.

**Senior Girls, Transition Year /LCA Girls:** Navy blue jumper with crest, plaid skirt, cream blouse, black tights / navy socks and plain black shoes. Navy trousers may be worn instead of a skirt.

*School Uniforms are available from local stockists.*

**Canteen Facilities:** Ballyhaunis Community School Canteen facilities are available on-site. Students can avail of a wide variety of hot and cold lunches, provided at a reasonable cost.



All payments to the school can be made online through the Way2Pay platform. When a payment is due a text will be sent to the parent/ guardian's phone requesting payment.



## Junior Cycle

Students enrolling in Ballyhaunis Community School will follow the Junior Cycle Programme for their first three years in secondary school.

Junior Cycle students typically study 10 subjects for their Junior Cycle exams. 7 from the core list and 3 optional subjects. Students pre-choose their optional subjects before beginning in 1st year.

Student Wellbeing is at the heart of the vision for the new Junior Cycle - All Students study the following subjects as part of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme: Physical Education, Guidance, S.P.H.E and C.S.P.E. And ICT

### Assessment

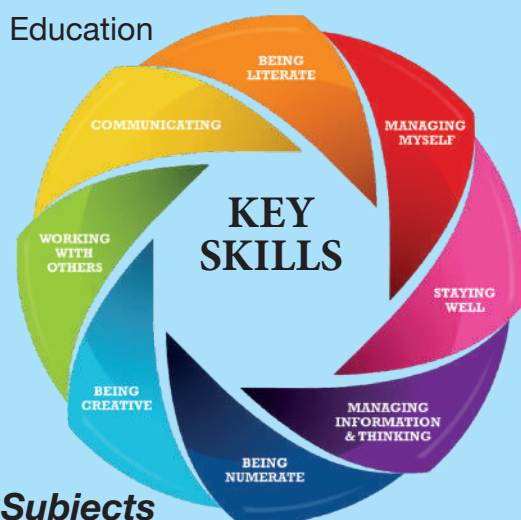
English, Irish and Maths are assessed at both Higher and Ordinary level. All other subjects are now Common level.

The Junior Cycle is assessed using a combination of continuous and final assessments. This means that during 2nd year and 3rd year students complete a series of Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's) and Assessment Tasks (AT's). They also sit exams (maximum of 10) at the end of the Junior Cycle Programme. Students' achievements are recorded on their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement and this is presented to students on the completion of the Junior Cycle Programme.

## Junior Cycle

### Core Subjects

- Irish\* *(unless officially exempt)*
- English
- Maths
- Science
- Geography
- History
- Religious Education



### Optional Subjects

- French
- Home Economics
- Business Studies
- Visual Art
- Music
- Wood Technology
- Engineering
- Graphics

### Non-exam subjects

Well-being subjects: CSPE, SPHE, PE, ICT, Guidance





## TY-Transition Year Programme

The Transition Year programme is a unique one-year programme that promotes the personal, social, educational and vocational development of students. Students are encouraged to take a greater responsibility for their own learning and decision making. TY enables students to make the transition from the more dependent type of learning associated with Junior Cycle to the more independent learning environment associated with Senior Cycle and equips them with the skills necessary to achieve their full potential in the Leaving Cert exam.

Through work experience students are prepared for the world of work and develop their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society. The school recognises that assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning process – assessment and certification within Transition Year is school-based.

**In addition to traditional subjects Transition Year students participate in a wide range of interesting modules including:**

- ICT / Coding
- Mini Company / Enterprise Education
- GAA Future Leaders
- Erasmus
- Community Care
- TV/Radio Production
- JP2 Awards
- Life Skills
- Development Education
- Architecture
- Mental Health Awareness
- First Aid/CPR
- Driving Instruction
- Junk Kouture
- CSI Workshop
- Charity Fundraising
- TEFL







# Leaving Certificate Programmes

## CORE CURRICULUM

- Irish
- English
- Mathematics
- Religious Education
- Career Guidance
- P.E.
- IT

In addition, a choice will be available from the extensive range of option subjects currently offered to students.

**Students pick four subjects from the following list:**

- ART
- ACCOUNTING
- AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE
- BIOLOGY
- BUSINESS
- CONSTRUCTION STUDIES
- ENGINEERING
- FRENCH
- GEOGRAPHY
- HISTORY
- MUSIC
- HOME ECONOMICS SCIENTIFIC & SOCIAL
- PHYSICS/CHEMISTRY
- DESIGN + COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS
- LCVP LINK MODULES

## Leaving Cert Vocational Programme (LCVP)

This is a Leaving Cert Programme designed to give a strong vocational dimension to Leaving Cert. The programme combines the traditional Leaving Cert with Link Modules that focus on self-directed learning, enterprise, work and community.

### Certification

LCVP students receive the same certificate as other Leaving Certificate students but their Certificate includes an additional statement of the results of the Link Modules. Students are graded with either a Distinction, Merit or Pass. The Link Modules are recognised for points purposes by the Institutes of Technology and the Universities.

## Leaving Cert Applied Programme

The Leaving Cert Applied is a distinct, self-contained two-year programme aimed at preparing students for adult and working life. It is intended to meet the needs of students who are not adequately catered for by the other Leaving Certificate Programmes.

## Courses offered are in three main areas

### 1. Vocational Preparation

Focusing on preparation for work and work experience.

### 2. General Education

Giving students general life skills.

### 3. Social Education

Explore topics related to self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, health care and contemporary social, economic, political and cultural issues.

Students who successfully complete the programme will receive a Leaving Certificate which will be awarded at three levels – Pass, Merit and Distinction. A student can proceed to further education through the vast majority of Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLC).



## "Creating a Caring Community"

### Fostering Student Wellbeing

In Ballyhaunis Community School we aim to promote a spirit of concern for others within and beyond the school community. Our school offers a Care Structure for all students through the Pastoral Care System which includes our Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Year heads and Wellbeing teachers.

First Years are assigned a Year-Head. The role of the Year Head is to oversee the welfare of the year group so that learning at every level of the person is supported. The Year Head monitors the pastoral and behavioural needs of the students in her/his care. In addition, each first-year student is assigned a Senior Mentor who helps him or her integrate into the life of the school. We encourage students if they are experiencing problems or difficulties or just simply want to have a chat and need someone to listen, to make an appointment to meet with the Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor

### Learning Support & Special Educational Needs

A support structure for students with additional learning needs is provided through our Special Educational Needs Department. For those students we provide the services of trained SET teachers who will assess the particular needs of the students and, in keeping with current legislation, devise a plan of work best suited to the learning needs of the students involved. Some students may qualify for the services of an SNA. The provision of the services of an SNA is at the discretion of the NCSE. The school has the limited service of a NEPS psychologist, which enables us to have a small number of psychological assessments carried out annually.

### ASD Unit

Our ethos at BCS is to support every student to reach their full potential by offering a holistic teaching approach in other areas outside the mainstream curriculum, areas such as Communication, Behaviour and Social Development. Our ASD class offers an autism specific learning environment including TEACCH, Social Stories, Individual support plans incorporating visual, meaningful, and motivating classes. Our class also creates a calm, sensory aware, predictable environment for our students.

We endeavour to offer optimum inclusion across the whole school community with access to mainstream activities as appropriate to the individual student

### Guidance

Our comprehensive guidance programme begins in 1st year to assist students and their parents/guardians with the transition into Post-Primary school and subject choice. Guidance continues throughout the student's entire time in the school, with all students receiving both in class and individual support covering areas like study skills, aptitude testing, pathways to third level and advice on career options.

### Evening Study

Evening Study is open to all students though priority is given to 3rd and 6th year students.





*"It's about fulfilling your potential, it's about the beginning of new friendships".*

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to participate in the many and varied range of extracurricular activities and so develop skills and competencies in many areas.

### The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including

- School Tours
- School / Class retreats and liturgies
- Field Trips
- Competitions involving debates, quizzes etc.
- Various school sports teams
- Students Council
- School Musical
- Senior Mentor Programme
- Folk Choir
- JP2 Awards
- Talent Competitions
- Multi-Cultural Awareness
- Ongoing recycling campaign
- Visiting speakers
- School Gym
- Fundraising and charitable work
- Table Tennis
- Pool Club
- Games Club
- Outdoor Pursuits

## Sporting Activities

Ballyhaunis CS has a long and distinguished record in sport. We endeavour to cater for all our students.

### Sports available in the school include:

- Athletics
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Camogie
- Equestrian
- Gaelic Football
- Golf
- Hurling
- Snooker
- Soccer
- Swimming
- Table Tennis



# Comments From Students currently in 1st Year

I felt anxious coming into the school but now that I have settled in, I feel very happy. I would recommend other pupils to come to BCS.

The teachers are very friendly and supportive

Coming into BCS was a big change from sixth class. It is a very challenging experience but the services BCS provide made it very easy such as our Mentors and the Bonding Day and being able to talk to all the teachers. I would encourage all sixth class to come.

I love BCS, I have made lovely new friends. I love how we get to try out all the subjects. The teachers are nice and make class interesting and fun. I feel that I have rapidly progressed since primary school.

There is nothing to be afraid of because all the teachers and staff are friendly and helpful. You can play lots of sports. I am really enjoying my first year in BCS.

I really have enjoyed my first term in BCS. My year head and mentor have been a great help. There are a lot of extra-curricular activities to get involved in and I have a lot of new friends.

It took me a few days to settle but I made new friends quickly. I was a bit nervous for a few days and felt like I didn't know anyone, but I like it now and I am in the choir.

Coming into BCS was a big change and so far, I've really enjoyed it. Our mentors, teachers, Principal & Deputy Principals are kind and welcomed us into the school. I have made lots of friends and there are lots of activities to enjoy.

BCS seems big and scary but I have made loads of new friends and after a few weeks it feels like home. I was expecting to be bombarded with work and homework, but it's not too bad – it's just the right amount.

The first time I walked into the school I was so nervous and scared, the following week I was happy and not so nervous. I had met so many new friends and all the staff are nice

The Mentors are great for helping you around the school. All the students are welcoming, and the Chaplain and teachers helped us to settle into first year. There are so many extra-curricular activities and lots of practical subjects to try out.

When I was in sixth class, I felt scared because I thought I wouldn't make any new friends. Within the first month I had lots of new friends. I have joined the U-14 girls Gaelic and I have made lots of friends from 1st and 2nd year.





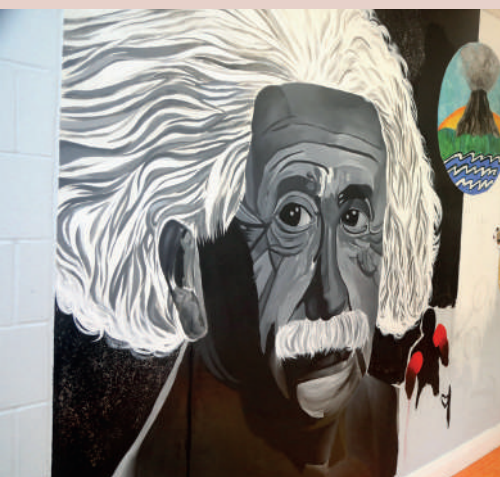
## Student Council

The Student Council is an intrinsic part of the school community. It gives students an important voice in matters pertaining to the student body and the general running of the school. It is a democratically elected council, representing students from every year group in the school. It provides a direct line of communication between students, management, staff and parents/guardians and offers valuable leadership experience for students elected to sit on the council.

## Parents' Association

Ballyhaunis Community School Parents' Association is a valued part of our school community. A committee is elected every three years to represent the general body of parents and membership of the Association is open to the parents/guardians of all students attending the school. The Parents' Association are involved in a number of activities:

- Representing the views of parents
- Fostering and maintaining a spirit of co-operation between parents, staff and school management
- Providing a forum to discuss parent's views and exchange ideas and concerns with school management.
- Improving and developing facilities in the school through fundraising endeavours.





*"Pastoral care, the wide curriculum, and the range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities organised for students are particular strengths of the school"*



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