

Ballyhaunis Community School



Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Admissions Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on: _____

Signature: _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Commenced:	January 2025
Next review due:	January 2028

Ballyhaunis Community School is dedicated to providing an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for all students. The **Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)** programme is a two-year Leaving Certificate programme aimed at preparing students for adult and working life.

The programme sets out to recognise the talents of all students and to provide opportunities for developing personal responsibility, self-esteem and self-knowledge, and helps students apply what they learn to the real world.

This policy outlines the criteria and procedures for admission to the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme in Ballyhaunis Community School.

General Admission Criteria:

1. Eligibility:

Age Requirements: Typically, students must be in their final year of junior cycle (usually 15-16 years old) and will enter the LCA programme in senior cycle.

Academic Requirements: Admission to LCA generally does not require students to have completed specific subjects, although basic proficiency in literacy and numeracy is beneficial. The focus is on students who may not be suited to the traditional Leaving Certificate programme and prefer a more hands-on, practical approach to learning.

Enrolled students: Priority for admission to the LCA programme will be given to students currently enrolled in Ballyhaunis Community School.

Local Community: Priority for admission is generally given to students living within the school's catchment area or those from the local community.

Special Educational Needs (SEN): If a student has specific learning needs or requires additional **supports**, the school has a framework to assess how best to support their inclusion in the LCA programme.

2. Application Process:

Applications for admission to LCA are requested during the second school term, in conjunction with the Senior Cycle process.

In January a formal evening presentation will be delivered to parents/guardians of third year/**Transition year** students interested in applying for a place on the programme. This will be delivered as part of Senior options week.

Students applying for the LCA Programme must complete and submit an application form to the LCA Programme Coordinator. The form should include:

- The reasons for their interest in the LCA Programme.
- Details of their research on the LCA Programme.
- The names of current LCA students they have spoken to about the programme.
- Their intended Work Experience placement.

- Why they believe they would be a valuable addition to the LCA Programme.
- Any other relevant information.
- Application form must be submitted within the specified deadline for applications.

Interview or Discussion: Applicants must then attend an interview. This Interview will be conducted by the LCA Programme Coordinator and at least 1 other members of the teaching staff. The school may require a discussion with the student and their parents or guardians to discuss the student's needs, aspirations, and readiness for the LCA programme.

3. Number of Places Available:

The number of places available for the LCA programme may be limited, dependent upon staffing, facilities and resources. The final allocation of places is determined annually by the Board of Management.

4. Selection Criteria:

The following factors will be considered in the selection process:

Application form and performance at interview.

Age profile: of the student may be taken into consideration.

Record of School attendance: students must have a satisfactory attendance record in the school. The LCA programme uses a unique system of assessment. The students' work is assessed over two years of the programme. Students gain credit as they progress through the programme provided that they have a minimum of 90% attendance.

Academic performance: While the LCA programme is not strictly based on academic results, the school will assess students' overall performance at Junior Cycle, with consideration given to effort and behaviour.

Student's commitment to the programme: LCA places a high value on motivation and willingness to engage with the full range of learning opportunities offered. This includes academics, work experience, and personal development.

Teacher Recommendations: In some cases, teachers may be asked to provide recommendations based on a student's performance in junior cycle or their ability to thrive in a vocational programme.

Space availability: In the event of the number of applications exceeding the number of available spaces in the programme, a waiting list may be applied, prioritising students who meet the application criteria.

5. Work Experience:

Work experience is an essential component of the LCA programme. It is the responsibility of the student to acquire a work experience placement before the start of both Year 1 and Year

2, ideally four different placements over the two years in total, one for each module. Students are required to attend work placements on Fridays during the school term. It is important that students carefully select their work experience opportunities.

For each work experience placement, students are required to complete the Work Experience Diary to a satisfactory standard and submit Employer Report Cards. Failure to complete or return these documents will result in the loss of essential credits.

Students will be closely monitored during their work experience placements. The LCA coordinator will telephone/visit, and interview both the student and their employer.

6. Special Considerations:

- Given the DEIS status of Ballyhaunis Community School, priority may be given to students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, in line with DEIS goals to address inequality in educational outcomes.
- Additional supports (academic, social, or emotional) may be offered to students who may benefit from them, based on the school's assessment of needs.
- Students with special educational needs (SEN) will be considered on an individual basis, with reasonable accommodations made where possible to support full participation in the LCA programme.

7. Retention of Students in LCA:

- Students are expected to commit to the full two years of LCA.
- If a student wishes to withdraw from the LCA programme early, they will be required to meet with the LCA coordinator and school management to discuss their reasons for leaving and explore alternatives.

8. Fee Structure:

The school will provide a detailed breakdown of any associated fees within the LCA programme. These may include costs for trips, activities, and materials. Efforts will be made to keep fees as affordable as possible, with possible financial support for families experiencing hardship.

9. Additional Considerations:

- LCA students are important ambassadors for the school and are expected to uphold school rules at all activities.
- Students and parents must sign a contract of behaviour.
- September is a probationary month on the LCA programme.

10. Conclusion:

Ballyhaunis Community School is committed to providing a supportive and engaging learning environment for all students. The LCA programme is a valuable experience designed to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and maturity required in preparation for adult and

working life. Through careful selection and an inclusive approach, we aim to ensure that every student who participates in the LCA programme can reach their full potential.

For further information please contact the school office or visit the school website.

11. Monitoring, Review & Evaluation

This Admission Policy has been made available to school personnel, the parent's association and members of the school community. The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the Principal and updates reported to the Board of Management when necessary. The Admission Policy forms part of the Whole School Plan; it is an active document and will be fully reviewed every three years. The next date for a full review is during the academic year 2028/2029.

Appendix 1 -LCA Application Form 2025/26



Scoil Phobail Beal Atha h-Amhnais **BALLYHAUNIS COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

David McDonagh *Principal*
Orla Macken *Deputy Principal*
Patrick McGarry *Deputy Principal*

2025/26 Leaving Certificate Applied Application Form

Name :
Class :
E-mail :
Date of Birth :

1. Explain why you would like to pursue the Leaving Cert Applied Programme.

2. Explain how you have researched the LCA Programme.

Knock Road, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo. F35RF63
Tel: 094 9630235
Website: www.ballyhauniscs.ie

3. What current LCA student have you talked to in regard to what's involved in LCA?

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4. Where do you intend to get Work Experience?

5. Explain why you would be a good addition to LCA?

6. Any other relevant information? (Use an additional page if required)

Signed:

Parent/Guardian

Student

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