



**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary,
Community and Comprehensive Schools
and the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards**

**COMMENCEMENT OF CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE EDUCATION (ADMISSION TO
SCHOOLS) ACT 2018**

Changes to school admission processes

1. Purpose of Circular

The Minister for Education and Skills wishes to bring to the attention of school authorities the commencement of a number of sections of the above act which will require changes to school admission policies and processes. The new arrangements will apply to school admissions for the 2021/22 school year and subsequent years. The new arrangements do not apply for admission to the 2020/21 school year.

2. New arrangements to school admission processes

The new arrangements will involve the following changes to school admission policies:

• **Admission Policy**

All boards of management are required to draft a new admission policy in accordance with the act's requirements following consultation with the patron, the staff of the school and parents of current pupils. The new policy must contain a statement that the school will not discriminate against an applicant for admission on any of a number of grounds specified.

The new draft policy must be forwarded to the Patron for approval. On approval by the Patron the new school admission policy must be published by the school. The necessary steps are set out in the link below for your information.

• **Annual Admission Notice**

Each board of management must also prepare an Annual Admission Notice outlining specific information in respect of the application process for admission to the school year in question. This notice must be published a minimum of 1 week prior to a school accepting applications for admission.

• **Applications Process**

Boards of management cannot accept applications prior to the 1st October in the year preceding the intake year. For example for the intake group for the 2021/22 school year, schools cannot begin accepting applications for admission before the 1st October 2020.

This circular is not a legal interpretation of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018. Nor is it exhaustive in setting out the Act's provisions and requirements. It is the responsibility of each relevant school authority to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and to have in place the necessary policy, procedures and practices to ensure compliance with it.

3. Sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 commenced in 2018.
(this section should be read in conjunction with the FAQ document referenced below)

The Minister also wishes to remind managerial authorities of the following sections in relation to school admissions which were commenced in 2018 and are currently operational:

- School Fees

Recognised schools are prohibited from charging fees or seeking payment or contributions for admission to or for continued enrolment in a school.

- Religion as a selection criterion

Since 3rd October 2018 primary schools are prohibited from using religion as a selection criterion in school admissions. However there are protections in this provision to ensure that a child of a minority faith, can still access a school of their faith.

- Special Classes

The Minister has a power to compel a school to make additional provision in respect of children with special educational needs, where the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has identified a need for such provision within an area.

- Co-operation between Boards

Schools can share information in relation to school admissions in order to assist with the efficient admission of students.

4. Templates and Frequently Asked Questions

The Department has published on its website a template admission policy and template annual admission notice, along with a FAQ document to assist school authorities in relation to any queries they might have regarding the new admission process. These documents are available at the following links:

- [Commencement of Certain Sections of the Education \(Admission to Schools Act\) 2018–FAQ](#)
- [Template Admissions Policy](#)
- [Template Annual Admissions Notice](#)

5. Circulation and Queries

A copy of this circular should be provided to all members of the board of management/Education and Training Board and the staff of each school. A copy should also be provided to the parents association.

This circular may be accessed on the Department of Education and Skills website at www.education.ie. An Irish version of this circular is also available on the Department's website.

Enquiries regarding this Circular should be emailed to the Department at:
schoolgovernance@education.gov.ie

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School Governance
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