# New Admissions Arrangements for Post-Primary Schools

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## CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

January 2005

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

# CONTENTS

*Page*

## INTRODUCTION

School admissions arrangements should work for the benefit of children. Based on the principle of informed parental and pupil choice, the arrangements should be as simple as possible for parents to use. They should help parents to take the best decisions about the most appropriate school for their child.

In this document, the Department is seeking your views. The 11-plus examination is to end with the last Transfer Tests taking place in November 2008. (This means that pupils currently in P2 will be the first to transfer under the new arrangements.) We want to ensure that the admissions arrangements put into place after that, enable parents' views and aspirations for their children to be taken into account, as well as the professional experience and wisdom of the teaching profession and the wider education service.

Parents know their children best and it is both their right and responsibility to take the key decisions about their children's schooling. From September 2010 therefore, pupils will transfer to post-primary schools on the basis of informed parental choice. In making their choice, parents will wish to look to teachers and schools as invaluable sources of advice.

The end of the Transfer Tests at age 11 will help increase parental choice. This does not mean that there will be an even distribution of applications and places. Government recognizes that where schools are perceived to be of very different standing, parents will naturally wish to have their child admitted to the school with the better reputation. Parents will have different definitions and draw upon different sources of information when judging the respective merits of schools, but one thing is clear: parents want a "good school" for their child.

This poses a challenge to Government. We believe that schools are improving and that this in turn is being reflected in improved achievement at GCSE and A Level. However, it is clear that parents do not consider that all schools are yet "good enough" and this can result in them being disappointed if their first choice of school for their child is not met.

Government is committed through the capital building programme, the new curriculum and the Entitlement Framework, to do its part to ensure that parents have confidence that all schools are good enough for their child. It must also be recognised that new admissions criteria are required for schools to apply if they receive more applications than there are places available. These are also considered in this document.

Government is consulting on the new admissions arrangements at this early stage to ensure that parents and schools have a positive input to the final arrangements, to ensure that parents and schools have clarity about how they will operate and to ensure that the final proposals can be put in place in good time so that a smooth transition can be made.

## Responses

Questions to help prompt consideration of the issues are included throughout this document, and a separate response booklet is enclosed to help respondents provide a structured response. The questions are not intended to be an exhaustive list, and the response booklet also provides space for general comments to be made. Respondents are asked to complete the response booklet and return it in the pre-paid envelope to the Department of Education (DE) by **30th June 2005**. Additional copies of the consultation document and the response booklet can be obtained by contacting the Department of Education:

by phone:      028 9127 9638
by fax:        028 9127 9710
by e-mail:      *ppst@deni.gov.uk* or

by writing to:    Post-Primary Support Team
                  Department of Education
                  Rathgael House
                  Balloo Road
                  Bangor
                  Co Down
                  BT19 7PR

Please contact the Department if you require the documents in other formats. The documents can also be viewed on and downloaded from the Department's website (*www.deni.gov.uk*) and responses can also be e-mailed to the e-mail address above.

Responses to this consultation will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which gives the right of access to information held by all public authorities.

## CHAPTER 1

## CONTEXT FOR NEW ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

### Introduction

1.1     The next few years will be a period of major change for the school sector in Northern Ireland.  The changes will stem from a number of key factors including:

- implementing the recommendations from the Post-Primary Review;

- putting in place the new school curriculum as recommended by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA); and

- the need to take account of the continuing decline in pupil numbers.

1.2     The last of these will require significant adjustments to school provision whilst at the same time ensuring that we maintain – and indeed enhance – the range of educational opportunities available to pupils.

1.3     In reading the rest of this document, it is important to recognize that the new admissions arrangements being described will therefore take effect in an educational landscape which will be quite different to what we are used to today.  The purpose of this chapter is to outline very briefly the main changes which are expected.

# Key Educational Developments Prior to 2010

## Pupil Profile

1.4     The new Pupil Profile will provide parents with clear and objective information on their child's progress and achievements and an assessment of their attitudes, aptitudes and interests, as well as identifying areas for development and future learning.  This will help to inform parents and provide a basis for their discussions with schools on their child's progress and future educational needs.  It will also provide parents with clear and up to date information about their child when they are considering which post-primary schools to list on the Transfer Form, which is completed during a child's P7 year.  The Pupil Profile is currently being developed by CCEA. It will be the primary means of ensuring that parental choice is "informed choice".  The Profile will be a tool to help parents choose which post-primary school is most appropriate for their child, not for post-primary schools to choose which children to admit in the event of their school being oversubscribed.  An outline of the proposed key elements of the Profile is provided at **Appendix 1**.

1.5     When its introduction is complete, each child from P1 through to the end of compulsory schooling will have a Pupil Profile.  This will mean that throughout a child's education, parents will have a clearer understanding of their child's capabilities and skills.  They should therefore be well informed when key decisions have to be taken on future post-primary education, or the most appropriate educational pathway and courses at age 14 and 16.

## The New Curriculum

1.6     The new curriculum being introduced into post-primary schools in Northern Ireland will increase the choice and flexibility of subjects taught, introduce a broader range of vocational courses, improve

the relevance of the curriculum for young people, and better prepare them for life and work in the 21$^{st}$ Century. It will provide a more coherent and relevant programme, with greater emphasis on real-world skills and the specific element of Learning for Life and Work.  Since the introduction of the statutory curriculum in 1989, all pupils have had to work within largely the same curriculum, regardless of the type of school they attend.  The new curriculum will give schools greater flexibility to develop their own approaches to meet the needs of their pupils.

## Entitlement Framework

1.7     An Entitlement Framework will be introduced into all post-primary schools which will guarantee each pupil, regardless of the school he/she attends, access to a minimum number of courses.  It is anticipated that, when fully in place, the Entitlement Framework will secure access to at least 24 courses for pupils at Key Stage 4; and 27 courses for pupils post-16.  At both stages, at least one third of the courses available must be academic and at least one third must be vocational.

1.8     Schools will be able to reflect their own particular ethos by the weight they give to different aspects of the curriculum.  All schools will be required to provide a minimum statutory curriculum up to age 16.  Whilst some may choose to have a traditional academic emphasis, others may choose to have, for example, an industry focus that provides their pupils with job-relevant skills and qualifications.  The Entitlement Framework will ensure that pupils have access to more than one style of curriculum.

1.9     The Entitlement Framework will provide greater flexibility and choice both within and between schools, providing parents and pupils with more options from which to choose.  The Entitlement

Framework will end the wide disparity in provision between post-primary schools that exists at present.

## Cooperation and Collaboration

1.10    It is unlikely that schools individually will be able to provide access to the full range of courses required under the Entitlement Framework.  Schools will need to collaborate with each other and with their local Further Education (FE) College.  This sharing of expertise, knowledge and resources will benefit the pupils and the schools involved.  The development of collaborative arrangements through enhanced ICT provision, synchronized timetabling etc. will also open up greater opportunities for different learning experiences for pupils, whilst they still remain part of their chosen school.

## Specialist Schools

1.11    The Government plans to pilot a number of Specialist Schools in Northern Ireland over the next 5 years.  This initiative would not be about opening more schools, but about changing the nature and focus of existing schools.  Specialist Schools would provide a broad and balanced curriculum to all pupils alongside a special focus on a chosen specialist area e.g. ICT.  This would help to develop individual school strengths, promote innovation and share good practice throughout the whole school system.

# Oversubscribed Schools and Demographic Trends

1.12    Many schools in Northern Ireland are very popular, and at present almost half of all post-primary schools are oversubscribed, i.e. receive more applications than there are places available.  Faced with oversubscription, schools apply admissions criteria to determine which pupils to admit.

1.13    The pattern of oversubscription varies across Northern Ireland. In the Greater Belfast area, almost two thirds of schools were oversubscribed last year, whilst areas in the west and south of the province such as Fermanagh, Omagh, Strabane, Craigavon and Newry and Mourne had significantly fewer oversubscribed schools.

1.14    The degree to which schools are oversubscribed also varies significantly. The figures for last year show that:

- half of the oversubscribed schools were oversubscribed by less than 20% (i.e. the schools had less than 20% more applications than the places available);

- a quarter of the oversubscribed schools were oversubscribed by less than 10%; and

- 16% of oversubscribed schools were oversubscribed by 50% or more, with two schools receiving twice the number of applications for places.

1.15    By 2010, the post-primary school-age population is projected to fall by 9%, and by 2015 it is projected to fall by 16%.  This will mean 17,000 fewer young people by 2010, and 30,000 fewer by 2015.  This decline will lead to a reduction in the demand for places in post-primary schools, which in turn is likely to affect the number of oversubscribed schools. **Appendix 2** sets out information on levels of oversubscription and demographic trends in more detail.

1.16    There is no doubt that there will always be popular schools and a number will continue to be oversubscribed.  However, in some areas the demand for places will be less and fewer schools are likely to have to apply admissions criteria.  This should reduce the pressure which the transfer process currently creates for parents, pupils and schools.

## CHAPTER 2

## PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

2.1     The Department believes that the new admissions arrangements should be based on certain key principles and objectives.

2.2     The proposed **principles** for new admissions arrangements are that they should:

- put the interests of the child at the centre of the decision-making process;

- be transparent, consistent and easily understood by parents;

- be based upon informed choice by parents and pupils;

- be fair and free from any bias or indirect discrimination against particular groups or individuals; and

- acknowledge that schools normally serve local communities.

2.3     The proposed **objectives** for new admissions arrangements are to:

- ensure parents have a clear role in the process and are better informed to make key decisions for their children;

- maximise opportunities for parents to exercise their preference;

- ensure as far as possible that the admissions criteria of schools in a local area are complementary, so that each child is given some priority under at least one set of admissions criteria in that area;

◆ take account of the particular circumstances of pupils with special educational needs;

◆ give schools sufficient flexibility in setting their criteria to reflect their local circumstances; and

◆ provide a clear-cut decision that reduces the need for appeal.

**The Department is seeking your views on whether the principles and objectives outlined above provide a sound basis on which to develop new admissions arrangements.**

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## CHAPTER 3

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## CHOOSING A POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Introduction

3.1     The last Transfer Tests will be held in 2008.  Thereafter, the fundamental principle underlying the new arrangements will be informed parental and pupil choice.  This will involve parents deciding which schools best meet their child's educational needs, aptitudes, interests and aspirations, and listing those schools in order of preference on the Transfer Form.

3.2     Northern Ireland has a range of high quality schools, able to meet the wide variety of educational needs and aspirations of their pupils.  In the coming years, the range of educational opportunities will be extended through the Entitlement Framework and the development of Specialist Schools.  It will also be normal for local schools to collaborate with one another and with their local FE college in order to secure greater flexibility and choice for pupils.

3.3     Parents should therefore feel confident about being able to secure a place for their child in a school which will be suited to his or her educational needs, interests and aspirations.  The transition from primary to post-primary education is, nevertheless, a significant event in every child's educational career and it is important that the choice of post-primary school - from the range of different styles of provision available - is well informed.

3.4    In this context, "informed" has two main dimensions:

- Parents need to have a clear understanding of their child's educational achievements as well as of their interests and aspirations. It will be important that they discuss the options for post-primary schooling with their child. They also need to have an informed understanding of his or her personal development, educational needs, capabilities and aptitudes. The new Pupil Profile will have a significant part to play here. However, parents need to have a clear understanding about what the Profile is telling them about their child's social and personal development, what the assessment 'levels' mean and how their child is progressing in relation to the broad expectations for their year group. (See paragraph 3.7 below and Appendix 1.)

- Parents need to have access to good quality information about what different schools have to offer and what will be expected of their child, for example the style and pace of the curriculum, the amount of homework etc.

3.5    In order to be sufficiently informed, parents should have a right to expect the following:

3.5.1    **In relation to their child:**

- that the Pupil Profile will provide clear and objective information about progress and achievement and an assessment of aptitudes, interests and aspirations. This will be suitably 'quality assured' and consistent across schools and between pupils;

- that they will receive good quality explanatory information, whether from DE, CCEA or Education and Library Boards (ELBs), to help them interpret the Profile; and

- that they will have an opportunity to discuss the content of the Profile with their child's primary school and receive advice on what type of post-primary provision might be the most suitable.

3.5.2 **In relation to post-primary schools:**

- that parents and pupils will have access to school prospectuses which will set out clearly the type of curriculum the schools offer, their expectations of pupils and the range of support available;

- that parents and pupils will have an opportunity to visit the post-primary schools they are interested in, whether during open days or information evenings; and

- that there will also be an opportunity for individual discussions with potential post-primary schools, which may include discussion of the Pupil Profile, so that parents can be as fully informed as possible about whether the school would be able to meet their child's educational needs and aspirations.

3.6 The remainder of this chapter looks in more detail at each of the above elements and also at the overall transfer timetable, which needs to provide sufficient opportunity for parents to receive the full range of advice and support. The Department is seeking your views on each of the following:

- the Pupil Profile;

- advice from the primary school;

- advice from the post-primary school;

- advice from DE/ELBs;

- continuing advice during post-primary education; and

- the timetable for the admissions process.

## Pupil Profile

3.7     A Pupil Profile for each child will be completed each year.  The
        Pupil Profile will replace the current Annual Report and will be a
        fuller document.  It will provide parents with clear and objective
        information about their child's progress and achievements and an
        assessment of their attitude to learning, their aptitude for learning
        and their particular interests  - see **Appendix 1**.  In addition, it
        will indicate areas for development and future learning.  The Pupil
        Profile will be based on ongoing teacher assessment which will
        be to a consistent standard within and across schools.  It is
        anticipated that parents would be given ongoing information and
        guidance in conjunction with the annual Pupil Profile, to assist
        their understanding of the information it contains.

3.8     The Profile will be introduced in 2007/08 for pupils in P5, and
        rolled out to all pupils in subsequent years.  This will ensure that
        parents of the first cohort of pupils transferring under the new
        arrangements will have a Pupil Profile covering at least 2 years to
        inform their decisions.  Eventually, all pupils from P1 to the end of
        compulsory schooling will have a Pupil Profile completed each
        year.

3.9     Prior to deciding to which post-primary schools to apply for a
        place, parents will have an opportunity to discuss the content of
        the Pupil Profile with the primary school Principal and/or their
        child's P6 teacher at the annual parent-teacher meeting.  Parents
        will also have an opportunity to discuss their child's educational
        needs and aspirations with the post-primary schools to which
        they are considering applying.  Parents should wish to share the
        information in the Pupil Profile with these post-primary schools to
        ensure that discussions are well-informed and based on objective
        and relevant information about their child.  Parents can then use

the Pupil Profile and any additional information gathered through school visits and prospectuses to inform their final decision on which pathway best meets their child's educational needs.

**The Department is seeking your views on:**

**(a)   whether the Pupil Profile should be used in the way described above; and**

**(b)   whether there are alternative or additional ways in which the Profile should be used to help parents decide on future post-primary provision for their child.**

## Advice from the Primary School

3.10   It will be important that parents and primary schools look ahead to the transfer process as early as possible.  Towards the end of P6, as part of the annual parent-teacher meeting, parents will have the opportunity to discuss with the primary school Principal and/or P6 teacher, their child's progress and achievements to date, as well as their future educational needs.  The Pupil Profile will play an important role in this discussion which should help to clarify parents' thinking about their child's educational needs and aspirations and how they can best be met in post-primary education.  Primary schools would not normally recommend specific schools but would offer general advice to assist parents and pupils in reaching their decision.

**The Department is seeking your views on the information/advice which should be available from the primary school to help parents make informed decisions.**

## Advice from the Post-Primary School

3.11     Parents and pupils will need clear information about the range of post-primary schools available to them and the educational provision they offer.  Set out below are various ways in which this information could be made available:

- ◆ **Attending open days/evenings** - Parents and their child should be able to attend the open days/evenings of the post-primary schools that they are considering.  At present, open nights are held in January or February of the P7 year, but under new arrangements, it is suggested that they should be held during the first term of the P7 year, possibly October or November.  This will provide parents and pupils with an initial impression of the school and help parents to short-list schools to which they will apply.  Schools may wish to hold more than one open day/evening during this first term to facilitate parents.

- ◆ **Post-primary school prospectuses** - Each post-primary school currently produces a prospectus providing detailed information about the school.  Regulations were made in 2003 setting out a wide range of information that must be included in school prospectuses, such as:

  - • information about the school curriculum, including careers guidance and details of courses leading to external qualifications at ages 16 and 18;

  - • an outline of the school's expectations for its pupils e.g. homework and uniform policies;

  - • information on the extra-curricular activities available; and

  - • the school's links with the community.

This could be expanded to ensure that the following key information is provided:

- how the school will provide access to the Entitlement Framework, including the involvement of other providers e.g. FE Colleges;

- the focus of the school curriculum; and

- clear progression routes for its pupils, in terms of both courses within the school and routes beyond into further or higher education, training or employment.

A copy of the prospectus could be issued to parents and pupils at open days/nights and could be available on request from the school as well as on-line.

- ◆ **Web-based information** - It is important that parents and pupils have access to information all year round so that the transfer process is not concentrated in the last few weeks before parents are required to complete Transfer Forms. It would therefore be useful for post-primary schools to have a broad range of information relating to their school available on-line e.g. school prospectus, dates of open nights, links with other schools etc.

- ◆ **Discussions with parents** - Following the schools' open nights and before parents complete the Transfer Form, it is suggested that parents could arrange to meet with post-primary schools on a one to one basis, to discuss how their child's educational needs, aptitudes, interests and aspirations could be met at that particular school. Sufficient time would need to be made available by the post-primary schools for these discussions to take place. It would be an opportunity for parents to talk to staff and get first-hand information about the school to assist them in making their decision. Whilst it would be for parents to choose whether

or not to visit the proposed schools, for many parents this could be an important element of the decision-making process. The overall admissions timetable would have to provide a sufficient period of time during which these discussions could take place.

Parents will want to get the best advice from post-primary schools to help them make the right decision for their child. To ensure that parents get informed, professional advice from schools, parents should provide the post-primary school with a copy of their child's Pupil Profile. This could be provided in advance of the meeting to give the school sufficient opportunity to consider the information before the meeting takes place, or the parent could take the Pupil Profile to the school at the time of the meeting.

**The Department is seeking your views on:**

**(a)** **the range of information outlined above to help parents make informed decisions;**

**(b)** **the role of the post-primary school in advising parents; and**

**(c)** **whether any other information/support should be provided to parents to assist the decision-making process.**

## Advice from DE/Education and Library Boards

3.12    It is proposed that, in September of the P7 year, parents should receive an information pack which would include a guidance leaflet explaining the different stages of the transfer process, parents' role in the process and the roles of the other main bodies, including primary schools, post-primary schools, ELBs and the Department. The pack could also include a copy of the relevant ELB Transfer Booklet(s) giving general information about

the transfer process, descriptions of each school and their admissions criteria.

3.13    The ELB Transfer Officers already provide support to parents to help them through the admissions process and they should continue to be accessible to parents and provide factual, procedural advice.  A help-line could be set up in each of the Board areas to provide general advice to parents during the transfer process and this could be supported by extensive web-based information.  The Department of Education's website and ELB websites could provide a central portal through which parents could access the websites of schools in their local area.

**The Department is seeking your views on the information/advice which should be available from DE/Education and Library Boards to help parents choose the most suitable post-primary school.**

## Continuing Advice During Post-Primary Education

3.14    Throughout post-primary education, the Pupil Profile will provide a more structured basis for the informed, ongoing dialogue between parents, pupils and schools which already takes place, to monitor progress and achievements year by year and ensure that the pupil's needs and aspirations are being met.

3.15    It is important to recognise that the choice of post-primary school at age 11 need not necessarily be the only or final determinant of a child's educational pathway until they leave school.  Children mature at different ages, and they will also develop particular interests and career aspirations as they grow older.  Post-primary education needs to be flexible to respond to these changing needs.  It must be alert to indications of whether a child is struggling or not being sufficiently challenged.

3.16    If it were to become evident that a pupil's needs were not being fully met, consideration could and should be given to a change of educational pathway and, where appropriate, a change of educational setting. This will be particularly important at the end of Key Stage 3 (age 14) which marks the transition from a child's general education to the more differentiated provision – including the wider choice available under the Entitlement Framework – that will form the basis of study for external examinations at age 16 and 18. In all cases, schools will wish to ensure that pupils and parents are given an appropriate opportunity, via a pre-arranged discussion, to review progress and consider the options for the future.

3.17    It would be important to ensure that pupils are involved in any discussion about future educational provision, and that parents' and pupils' decisions take account of careers guidance both from within the school and from the Careers Service of the Department for Employment and Learning. Parents and schools could also agree to seek independent advice from the relevant ELB on the type of education most suited to the pupil's educational needs and aspirations, and how that can best be provided, including consideration of alternative settings. After taking account of the full range of information, the final decision about the pupil's future educational provision would rest with the parent and the pupil.

**The Department is seeking your views on what information/ advice should be available to assist with choices of educational pathway, during post-primary education.**

## Timetable for the Admissions Process

3.18    The current admissions timetable is built around the Transfer Tests, with parents applying to post-primary schools after the results of the Transfer Tests are known in February.  Pupils receive notification of their post-primary school placement in late May. If necessary, admissions appeal tribunals are then held, often running well into the summer months.

3.19    As the new transfer arrangements will be based on the operation of informed parental choice, it is important that time is built into the process to enable parents to consider the full range of information available to them, to visit schools and to seek advice. The removal of the Transfer Tests may also provide an opportunity for decisions to be made sooner and this could allow more time for post-primary schools to have induction arrangements for Year 8 pupils.  This would help create a smooth transition for pupils from primary to post-primary education.

3.20    A possible broad timetable for the new admissions process is set out below.  It includes the following main stages for parents and schools:

- The annual meeting between the parent and primary school in the P6 year would include discussion of the Pupil Profile.

- From September-November of the P7 year, parents would receive information in relation to the transfer process and the range of schools available.

- Parents would make applications to post-primary schools by completing the Transfer Form in late November/early December.

- Post-primary schools would receive and process applications from January-March.

- Pupils would receive notification of the school to which they have been accepted by the end of March.

- Admissions appeals would be completed by the end of June.

- The summer term would be used by post-primary schools for the induction of new pupils.

**The Department is seeking your views on the broad timetable for the new admissions process (page 21).**

## TIMETABLE FOR NEW POST-PRIMARY ADMISSIONS PROCESS

| MONTH | PARENT | SCHOOL |
|---|---|---|
| March-July of P6 year | | DE reviews and sets admissions and enrolment numbers for the following year |
| May/June | | Post-Primary school reviews admissions criteria for the following year and sends to ELBs for inclusion in Transfer Booklet |
| May/June | | Primary and Post-Primary schools receive DE Circular containing advice on transfer process |
| May/June | Attend one to one annual parent teacher meeting and receive Pupil Profile | Primary school holds annual parent teacher meetings to include discussion of Pupil Profile |
| September of P7 year | Receive information pack including Transfer Booklet and guidance leaflet explaining transfer arrangements | Primary and Post-Primary schools receive copy of Transfer Booklets published by ELBs |
| October | Attend open days/evenings and receive copy of school prospectus | Post-Primary schools hold open days/evenings for P7 pupils and their parents and issue prospectuses |
| November | Arrange and attend informal discussions with prospective Post-Primary schools, if desired | Post-Primary schools provide time for discussions with prospective pupils and their parents |
| Late November/ early December | Attend meeting with Primary school Principal and complete Transfer Form | Primary school Principals hold meetings with parents, complete Transfer Forms and send them to ELBs |
| January-March | | Post-Primary schools receive and process Transfer Forms<br><br>Post-Primary schools inform ELBs of allocation of places to enable placement letters to issue |
| March | Receive letter from ELB advising of the Post-Primary school into which child has been accepted | |
| April | Final date to give notice of intention to appeal against decision of Post-Primary Board of Governors | |
| May/June | Attend Admissions Appeal Tribunal, if applicable<br><br>Support child's participation in induction process | Post-Primary schools participate in appeals process, as appropriate<br><br>Post-Primary schools arrange induction for new pupils |

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**CHAPTER 4**
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# PUPILS WITH COMPELLING INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES OR A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED

## Introduction

4.1    The new arrangements for transfer to post-primary school outlined in Chapter 3 will apply to most children in mainstream education.  However, some children will have specific needs that can only be provided for at a *particular* mainstream school. Sufficient provision and flexibility within the new arrangements are therefore required to ensure that these needs are met. Arrangements for pupils who would fall into the following categories are considered below:

- pupils with compelling individual circumstances; and

- pupils with a statement of special educational need.

## Compelling Individual Circumstances

4.2    Under new arrangements, special circumstances in the context of the Transfer Test will no longer be relevant.  However, some situations may arise where there are strong grounds for allowing a child to be admitted to a particular school.

### Relevant Cases

4.3    This category relates to circumstances affecting a child that are ***so compelling that they necessitate a child's attendance at a particular named school***, rather than any other school.  It is

envisaged that cases would be confined to the most exceptional circumstances and that they would therefore be few in number.

4.4　There should be sufficient flexibility to respond to individual cases and it is therefore not possible to provide a definitive list of the type of cases which should be considered under this category. Cases most likely to be considered are those which involve "looked after children" i.e. children in public care, and children who have a serious medical illness and require to be at a school which is either located near a hospital/medical centre or which has a nurse employed on site. Strong and unequivocal documentary evidence from a statutory body e.g. PSNI, Social Services Trusts, or other professional sources e.g. medical practitioner, would be required to support any claim.

4.5　In many cases, the relevant education authority will already be aware of those pupils who have compelling individual circumstances and therefore need special consideration. Parents should ensure that the education authorities are made aware of any compelling circumstances as early in the child's primary schooling as possible, although it is recognised that these may only emerge in the P6 or P7 years.

**The Department is seeking your views on the types of cases which should be considered as compelling individual circumstances.**

### Effect on school admissions and enrolment numbers

4.6　Given that this category of compelling individual circumstances would deal with the most exceptional cases, it is proposed that they should be considered first, outside of the normal admissions process. To facilitate this, pupils being admitted under this category could be supernumerary i.e. over and above the approved admissions and enrolment numbers of the particular

school.  This would mean that schools could admit those pupils for whom compelling individual circumstances arise throughout the year.  Given the extremely small number of pupils likely to be involved, schools should not have difficulty absorbing them.  An alternative approach could be to include those pupils with compelling individual circumstances in the school's admissions number before the transfer process begins; those for whom compelling circumstances arise after the transfer process has begun, would be counted as supernumerary.

**The Department is seeking your views on whether pupils admitted under this category should be supernumerary to schools' admissions and enrolment numbers.**

### Central Panel

4.7     At present, special circumstances claims are considered by individual Boards of Governors and concern has been expressed about the potential for inconsistency and lack of impartiality.  A Central Panel could bring consistency, objectivity and the necessary expertise required to consider what are often sensitive and problematic cases involving medical/psychological issues.  The Panel could comprise, for example, a medical practitioner, an educationalist and a social worker.  Criteria would be drawn up to assist them in the decision-making process.

**The Department is seeking your views on whether individual Boards of Governors or a Central Panel should consider cases of compelling individual circumstances.  If a Central Panel, your views are sought on its size and composition.**

## Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need

4.8     Some pupils have special educational needs which require additional or specific provision to be made for them.  This

provision is set out in a statement of special educational need. For such pupils, the transfer from primary to post-primary school is done through the statementing process which will determine the pupil's special educational needs and specify the type of school, and any particular school, which the Education and Library Board considers appropriate to meet those needs.

4.9    If a grant-aided school is named in the statement, the Board of Governors is required to admit the child to the school as supernumerary.  In such cases where the admission of the child causes a school to exceed its approved admissions or enrolment numbers, the Board of Governors does not have to apply for DE approval to exceed its numbers.

4.10   This provision for pupils with statements to be admitted as supernumerary was designed to ensure that they would be admitted to the school most appropriate to meet those needs. Placing pupils with statements of educational need in a school which has already filled all its places can, however, cause difficulties for the school, particularly in relation to class sizes.  An alternative approach could be to include those pupils who have statements in the school's admissions number before the transfer process begins; those who are statemented after the transfer process has begun would be counted as supernumerary.

**The Department is seeking your views on whether pupils with statements of special educational need should continue to be admitted as supernumerary.**

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## CHAPTER 5

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## ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR OVERSUBSCRIBED SCHOOLS

### Introduction

5.1     Future transfer to post-primary education will be on the basis of informed parental and pupil choice.  Parents will decide which schools best meet their child's educational needs, aptitudes, interests and aspirations and will list those schools in order of preference on the Transfer Form.  The current open enrolment arrangements will continue to apply i.e. where a parent applies to a school and that school has places available, the child will be admitted.  However, some schools will be oversubscribed i.e. have more applications than places available.  If this happens, schools will have to apply their admissions criteria to decide which pupils to admit.

5.2     At present, schools set and apply their own admissions criteria with the result that a wide range of criteria are used and there is limited consistency in how the criteria are defined or applied. This can make the process complex for parents to understand. However, although schools list a wide range of admissions criteria, in many cases not all of these criteria are applied.  A list of criteria published by schools, along with an analysis of the criteria used by a sample of schools to allocate places, are included in **Appendix 3**.

5.3     In order to streamline and simplify the process, the Department has accepted the recommendation that a menu of admissions criteria should be drawn up and schools should select from this

menu the criteria they would use when oversubscribed. This would provide schools with the flexibility to select criteria that best meet their particular circumstances, but within a framework that would ensure a greater degree of consistency, fairness and transparency.

5.4     The criteria included in a menu should be consistent with the principles and objectives outlined in Chapter 2 as well as conforming to statutory duties under Equality legislation. In particular, the menu should:

◆     put the interests of the child at the centre of the decision-making process;

◆     be transparent, consistent and easily understood by parents;

◆     be based upon informed choice by parents and pupils;

◆     be fair and free from any bias or indirect discrimination against particular groups or individuals;

◆     acknowledge that schools normally serve local communities;

◆     give schools sufficient flexibility to reflect their local circumstances; and

◆     provide a means for schools to make clear-cut decisions down to the last available place.

5.5     The same menu of admissions criteria would be available to all schools, including integrated schools. However, in order to ensure an appropriate religious mix, it is envisaged that integrated schools would continue to sort applications on the basis of religion and apply admissions criteria to each group separately.

## Admissions Criteria

5.6     Drawing on the criteria currently used by schools, the Department has identified a range of criteria which could be included in the menu.  They fall under 4 broad categories:

- Family-Focused Criteria;

- Community-Based Criteria;

- Geographical Criteria; and

- Tiebreakers.

5.7     The Department is seeking your views on the criteria listed, whether they meet the above principles, whether they should be included in a menu of admissions criteria and whether there are any additional criteria not listed which should be included.

## Family-Focused Criteria

5.8     If schools are to be family-focused, criteria should be included within the menu to support the family unit and to take account of practical considerations e.g. keeping siblings together.  The majority of schools already include a family focus in their criteria.  Two family-focused criteria are listed below for consideration:

- **Siblings currently at the school** - Priority would be given to those pupils who have siblings at the school at the time of application.  This would include half-brothers/sisters, but would not include siblings who formerly attended the school.

- **Eldest or Only Child** - This criterion would ensure that pupils without older siblings are not disadvantaged.  In the case of single-sex schools, the eldest child would be the first child in the family eligible to attend.

**The Department is seeking your views on the family-focused criteria listed above and their inclusion within a menu.**

## Community-Based Criteria

5.9     The inclusion of community-based criteria acknowledges that many schools serve their local community. The criteria listed below reflect historical patterns of enrolment and local communities and are widely used at present by schools:

- ◆ **Feeder Primary schools** - Primary schools tend to admit children from their localities and therefore broadly reflect their local communities. Post-primary schools could list traditional or new feeder primary schools to reflect the local community. Pupils from these primary schools would then be given priority at the post-primary school.

- ◆ **Parish** - The parish can be linked closely to the history and evolution of schools, for example in the Catholic Maintained sector, and could be used to define the local community. The use of the parish dimension would not be restricted to maintained schools, as other sectors could use religious parish networks to reflect local communities.

5.10    Many post-primary schools currently have a large number of feeder primary schools or include many parishes covering a very wide area. With both of these criteria, it would be important that schools do not name so many feeder schools or parish areas that the community basis of the criteria becomes meaningless. It would also be important from an equality perspective that some primary schools/areas are not deliberately or inadvertently excluded. Guidance would have to be drawn up by the Department in relation to the designation of feeder primary schools and parish areas to ensure that these criteria are effective, fair and transparent.

**The Department is seeking your views on the community-based criteria listed above, their inclusion within a menu and how they should be defined.**

## Geographical Criteria

5.11    There are benefits in children attending their nearest school in terms of both practicality and cost.  Giving some priority to geographical proximity also promotes local community cohesion and supports the concept that a school serves the local community.  **Table 4** in **Appendix 3** gives some information about the distances currently travelled by pupils to post-primary schools.  There could be provision within new arrangements to give each child some priority for admission to schools in their local area.  Two criteria are listed below for consideration:

- ◆    **School-Centred Catchment** - Under this criterion, a school would give priority to those pupils who live within a defined locality.  Catchment areas could be drawn up by the school or by an independent body.  The catchment could be defined in a variety of ways.  It could be based on electoral wards or district council areas in which the school is located.  Alternatively, it could specify an area within a certain defined radius of the school.  It would be necessary to take account of factors such as demography and location of primary schools.  This criterion would give a priority to each child living within the catchment area.  However, because catchment areas of this type would not automatically have common boundaries, there would need to be some additional mechanism to ensure that no child is disadvantaged because of gaps between adjacent areas.  This would be in line with the principle (paragraph 2.2) that the admissions arrangements should be free from any indirect discrimination.

- ◆    **Child-Centred Catchment** - Under this criterion, schools would undertake to give priority to pupils for whom they are the closest suitable school.  A pupil would be given priority at the school closest to their home, taking account of suitability in terms of denominational, non-denominational,

integrated and Irish-medium. Under child-centred catchment criteria, catchment boundaries would take full account of the location of other schools of the same type. A child would, therefore, receive priority for a place at their closest suitable school. If all schools used this criterion, it would mean that every child would be given a priority in at least one school - their closest suitable school.

5.12    It would be important from an equality perspective that geographical catchment criteria do not create artificial areas of exclusivity. It may be necessary to set a maximum percentage of places in each school that may be allocated in this way. This would ensure that, whilst respecting the practical and community benefits of locally-based schools, the choice of those living outside the catchment is also respected.

5.13    Under both school-centred and child-centred catchments, it would be important for schools to publish clear maps so that parents are able to see clearly at which school their child would be given priority, before completing the Transfer Form. The method of measuring the catchment area would have to be agreed and published by the school in advance of the transfer process.

> **The Department is seeking your views on:**
>
> **(a)    the geographical criteria listed above, their inclusion within a menu and the most appropriate means of operating them; and**
>
> **(b)    what percentage limit, if any, should be set for places allocated by geographical criteria.**

## Tiebreakers

5.14    It is anticipated that most children will be admitted to post-primary schools on the basis of those criteria discussed above. However,

admissions criteria must be capable of admitting pupils down to the last available place.  This is achieved through a tiebreaker criterion which would be applied at the end, after the other criteria chosen from the menu have been exhausted.  This would ensure that the tiebreaker is applied to a minimum number of pupils.  As is the case with all admissions criteria, tiebreakers should be consistent with the principles and objectives outlined in paragraph 5.4.  On that basis, two tiebreakers currently used by many schools – random selection and proximity from home to school - are listed for consideration:

♦   **Random Selection** - Schools currently use various methods of operating random selection, the most common being a computerised random selection based on name.  The letters of the alphabet are selected by computer in random order and this is published in the Transfer Booklet in advance of the transfer process.  Pupils are allocated places on the basis of the initial letter of the surname in the order set out in the Transfer Booklet.  Using this method, the letters would be changed annually and generated and published in advance of application so that parents could make an informed decision.  The relevant surname would be that which appears on the child's birth certificate.

  Other methods could be used e.g. age and name of child to generate a random number, or straightforward computer-based random lottery.  Both of these methods have the disadvantage that parents would not be able to assess, in advance, their child's chances of getting a place at a preferred school.  Schools could choose their own method of random selection but would have to publish the method as part of their criteria.  Alternatively, in the interests of consistency and transparency, all schools could be required to use the same process for randomly selecting pupils.

♦ **Proximity from home to school** - The distance from the child's home to the post-primary school would be measured. This would give priority to those pupils who live closest to the school, and for whom the school is more convenient. There are various methods of measuring this – as the crow flies, by shortest walking distance, by public transport routes etc. Schools could choose their own method of measuring proximity or, in the interests of consistency and transparency, all schools could be required to use the same method of measurement.

**The Department is seeking your views on:**

(a) **the tiebreakers listed above as a means of admitting pupils down to the last available place;**

(b) **the most appropriate method of operating random selection and/or measuring proximity; and**

(c) **whether schools should be free to use different methods of operating random selection or proximity.**

## Format of Menu

5.15    A key objective of new arrangements is to have a transparent system which is manageable and easily understood. This suggests the need for some consistency in terms of the criteria which schools use, but at the same time some flexibility to enable schools to take account of local circumstances. The previous section outlines potential criteria for inclusion in the menu, and this is summarised below:

**Family-Focused Criteria**

♦ Siblings currently at the school

♦ Eldest Child/Only Child

**Community-Based Criteria**

◆ Feeder primary schools

◆ Parish

**Geographical Criteria**

◆ School-Centred Catchment Area

◆ Child-Centred Catchment Area

**Tiebreakers**

◆ Random Selection

◆ Proximity from home to school

5.16 Under the current arrangements, schools vary the order in which they list and apply criteria. The development of new admissions criteria provides an opportunity to consider whether some order should be applied to the menu e.g. family-focused criteria first, before community-based criteria etc; whether some elements of the menu should be made compulsory e.g. siblings; or whether schools should be free to choose whichever criteria they wish from the menu.

5.17 This presents a number of possible options for consideration:

◆ **Option 1 - Open Menu** - Schools could choose whichever criteria they wish to apply from the menu. There would be no compulsory elements and schools could apply the criteria in any order they wish.

◆ **Option 2 - Compulsory Categories** - Schools would have to select at least one criterion from each category e.g. family-focused criteria, community-based criteria, geographical criteria, but could apply them in whichever

order they wish, with the tiebreaker applied at the end of the process.

♦ **Option 3 - Optional Categories and Compulsory Order** - The categories would not be compulsory i.e. any category could be omitted, but schools would have to apply them in a specified order i.e. family-focused criteria, followed by community-based criteria followed by….. etc

♦ **Option 4 - Compulsory Categories and Compulsory Order** - Schools would have to select at least one criterion from each category and would have to apply them in a specified order.

**The Department is seeking your views on:**

**(a)** **the possible options for the menu; and**

**(b)** **any other criteria that you believe should be included in the menu, bearing in mind the principles and objectives outlined in Chapter 2.**

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## CHAPTER 6

## ADMISSIONS APPEALS

### Introduction

6.1 Administration of the admissions process, including the application of admissions criteria, will continue to be a matter for the Boards of Governors of each post-primary school. Some parents may be disappointed that their child has not been accepted by a school of their preference and may wish to appeal the school's decision.

6.2 Article 15 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 gives parents the right to appeal the school's decision. The School Admissions (Appeal Tribunals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 outline the detail of the appeal arrangements. The statutory right of appeal would continue under new arrangements and it is not envisaged that the appeal process would need to change significantly. The key elements of the appeals process are set out below.

### Grounds for Appeal

6.3 The grounds for appeal are that the school did not apply its admissions criteria or did not correctly apply them when deciding which children to admit. The actual substance of the criteria cannot be challenged in an appeal tribunal. If the tribunal concludes that the criteria were correctly applied, the appeal is dismissed. If the tribunal considers that the criteria were not correctly applied, it must then go on to consider whether the child would have been admitted to the school had the criteria been

applied properly. If it is the case that the child would have been admitted, the tribunal must issue a direction to the Board of Governors requiring it to admit the child to the school. The tribunal cannot consider additional material which the school did not have an opportunity to consider at the time it was making its decision.

## Composition of Appeal Tribunal

6.4     Each ELB is responsible for establishing an appeal tribunal for schools in its area, but the tribunals are independent of the Board. They are composed of a chairman and 2 other members. Both the chairman and the members are selected from a panel of persons appointed by the ELB to act as either chairmen or members of appeal panels.

6.5     Certain categories of people are precluded from sitting on an appeal tribunal. These include: employees of the ELB other than full-time teachers; those involved in the original decision not to admit the child to the school; teachers of the school to which admission was refused; and teachers or a member of the Board of Governors of the school from which the child is transferring.

## Format of Appeal Tribunal

6.6     If parents wish to appeal a decision, they are provided with advice about the appeals process by the ELB. An appeal has to be made in writing to the ELB setting out the grounds on which it is made. Appeals are generally held in private. Both the parent and the Board of Governors are able to present both written and/or oral evidence to the tribunal and both may have a representative present. If the appeal involves the refusal of admission to a controlled school, a member of the ELB may also attend as an observer. An appeal tribunal may request the Board

of Governors to supply the tribunal with information about admissions and proposed admissions to the school.

6.7    In the event of a disagreement between the members of the tribunal, the decision is by majority vote.  The decision and the grounds on which it was made must be communicated in writing to the parent, the ELB and the Board of Governors.  Decisions of appeal tribunals are binding on all parties and consequently pupils may be admitted to the school even though the school will be exceeding its admissions and enrolment numbers.

## Timing of Appeals

6.8    Under current arrangements, appeal tribunals are held in the summer months after parents have received notification of their child's post-primary school placement.  As outlined in Chapter 3, new arrangements could enable the appeals process to be conducted during the months of May and June and be completed by the end of the summer term.  The exception would be appeals in relation to cases of compelling individual circumstances, which would be considered earlier in the process.

**The Department is seeking your views on whether the process for appealing the decisions of Boards of Governors not to admit a child to the school should be altered in any way.**

**Appendix 1**

## ANNUAL PUPIL PROFILE - OUTLINE OF CONTENT

### General Information

Name:

Class:

Attendance: %

Punctuality: (Comment)

### Skills Developed Across the Curriculum

- ◆ Talking and Listening

- ◆ Reading

- ◆ Writing

- ◆ Numeracy

- ◆ Information and Communication Technology

For each of these skills, each pupil would be assessed and assigned a level which indicates their attainment at the time of completion, along with some commentary on the pupil's performance.

- ◆ Thinking Skills

- ◆ Personal Capabilities

For each of these skills, qualitative comments would be provided.

### Progress within the Curriculum Areas

The Curriculum Areas include:

- The Arts
- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Personal Development
- Physical Education
- The World Around Us

Teachers would comment on each pupil's progress and achievement within each area.

### Attitudes, Aptitudes and Interests

- Attitudes to learning
- Aptitudes for learning
- Interests

Teachers would provide comments about the pupil in relation to each of these areas, identifying particular strengths, areas for development and recognising involvement and achievement in extra-curricular activities.

### Focus for Development

Teachers would identify areas of focus for further development drawn from any aspect of learning for use by parents, pupils and receiving teachers/schools.

### Additional Comments

Teachers would provide comments summarising achievements over the year.

# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND LEVELS OF OVERSUBSCRIPTION

**Table 1    Demographic Trends: Projected change in 11-17 year old population by Local Government District (2002-2010 and 2002-2015)**

| Local Government District | Estimated number of 11-17 year olds (2002 mid-year population estimate)[1] | Projected number of 11-17 year olds (2010)[2] | Percentage change 2002 estimate to 2010 projection | Projected number of 11-17 year olds (2015)[2] | Percentage change 2002 estimate to 2015 projection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Antrim | 5,100 | 5,000 | -1% | 5,000 | -1% |
| Ards | 7,200 | 7,300 | 1% | 6,800 | -6% |
| Armagh | 6,600 | 6,100 | -7% | 6,000 | -9% |
| Ballymena | 6,100 | 5,900 | -3% | 5,700 | -5% |
| Ballymoney | 3,000 | 3,000 | -3% | 2,900 | -5% |
| Banbridge | 4,500 | 4,300 | -4% | 4,300 | -5% |
| Belfast | 29,000 | 22,300 | -23% | 18,600 | -36% |
| Carrickfergus | 4,000 | 3,800 | -4% | 3,500 | -11% |
| Castlereagh | 6,200 | 6,500 | 5% | 5,600 | -11% |
| Coleraine | 5,900 | 5,600 | -5% | 5,200 | -11% |
| Cookstown | 4,200 | 3,700 | -12% | 3,800 | -10% |
| Craigavon | 9,200 | 8,400 | -9% | 7,500 | -18% |
| Derry | 13,600 | 11,700 | -14% | 10,500 | -23% |
| Down | 7,500 | 6,900 | -9% | 6,400 | -15% |
| Dungannon | 5,800 | 5,400 | -7% | 5,200 | -11% |
| Fermanagh | 6,900 | 5,800 | -15% | 5,400 | -22% |
| Larne | 3,200 | 2,800 | -11% | 2,500 | -23% |
| Limavady | 3,800 | 3,600 | -5% | 3,400 | -12% |
| Lisburn | 12,000 | 11,500 | -5% | 10,600 | -12% |
| Magherafelt | 4,900 | 4,600 | -6% | 4,500 | -7% |
| Moyle | 1,900 | 1,700 | -9% | 1,800 | -9% |
| Newry & Mourne | 10,900 | 10,200 | -6% | 10,000 | -8% |
| Newtownabbey | 7,900 | 7,300 | -8% | 6,900 | -14% |
| North Down | 7,400 | 6,500 | -12% | 5,800 | -21% |
| Omagh | 5,800 | 5,500 | -6% | 5,400 | -8% |
| Strabane | 4,700 | 4,300 | -7% | 4,100 | -13% |
| **Northern Ireland total[3]** | **187,200** | **169,800** | **-9%** | **157,200** | **-16%** |

**Sources/Notes:**

1.   Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2002 mid-year estimate of population - all figures rounded to nearest 100

2.   Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency population projections (2002 based) - all figures rounded to the nearest 100

3.   All counts rounded to nearest 100 - totals may not add due to rounding

## Table 2 Oversubscribed Post-Primary Schools by Local Government District 1999/2000 - 2003/04

| Government District | Number of oversubscribed schools | | | Total number of schools | | | % of oversubscribed schools | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1999/ 2000 | 2001/ 02 | 2003/ 04 | 1999/ 2000 | 2001/ 02 | 2003/ 04 | 1999/ 2000 | 2001/ 02 | 2003/ 04 |
| Antrim | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 50.0 |
| Ards | 3 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 42.9 | 28.6 | 42.9 |
| Armagh | 5 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 62.5 | 50.0 | 62.5 |
| Ballymena | 7 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 77.8 | 62.5 | 66.7 |
| Ballymoney | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 33.3 |
| Banbridge | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 33.3 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Belfast | 27 | 24 | 26 | 38 | 38 | 38 | 71.1 | 63.2 | 68.4 |
| Carrickfergus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 33.3 | 50.0 | 75.0 |
| Castlereagh | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 50.0 |
| Coleraine | 4 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 40.0 | 55.6 | 55.6 |
| Cookstown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Craigavon | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 12.5 |
| Derry | 9 | 7 | 8 | 15 | 15 | 13 | 60.0 | 46.7 | 61.5 |
| Down | 6 | 7 | 8 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 50.0 | 58.3 | 66.7 |
| Dungannon | 6 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 54.5 | 45.5 | 50.0 |
| Fermanagh | 4 | 4 | 4 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 26.7 | 26.7 | 25.0 |
| Larne | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Limavady | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 40.0 | 25.0 | 50.0 |
| Lisburn | 5 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 55.6 | 44.4 | 55.6 |
| Magherafelt | 4 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Moyle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Newry & Mourne | 7 | 6 | 5 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 50.0 | 42.9 | 35.7 |
| Newtownabbey | 4 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 57.1 | 85.7 | 42.9 |
| North Down | 4 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 57.1 | 66.7 | 66.7 |
| Omagh | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 33.3 | 37.5 | 37.5 |
| Strabane | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 25.0 |
| **Total** | **118** | **111** | **114** | **234** | **230** | **229** | **50.4** | **48.3** | **49.8** |

Source: The Department of Education

## Table 3     Level of Oversubscription by School Type 2003/04

| Level of oversubscription | Grammar | Secondary | Total | % of all schools | % of oversubscribed schools |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0-9% | 15 | 15 | 30 | 13.1 | 26.3 |
| 10-19% | 16 | 12 | 28 | 12.2 | 24.6 |
| 20-29% | 11 | 6 | 17 | 7.4 | 14.9 |
| 30-39% | 13 | 5 | 18 | 7.9 | 15.8 |
| 40-49% | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.3 | 2.6 |
| 50-59% | 7 | 1 | 8 | 3.5 | 7.0 |
| 60-69% | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.4 | 0.9 |
| 70-79% | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1.3 | 2.6 |
| 80-89% | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.3 | 2.6 |
| 90-99% | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.4 | 0.9 |
| 100% and over | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0.9 | 1.8 |
| **Total** | **67** | **47** | **114** | **49.8** | **100** |

Source:  The Department of Education

# ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AND DISTANCES TRAVELLED BY PUPILS TO POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

## Table 1    Admissions Criteria Published by Post-Primary Schools (2004/05)

| Criterion | Number of Schools | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Transfer Test Grade | 70 | 31 |
| Siblings currently enrolled | 221 | 97.8 |
| Only/Eldest child/1st child | 126 | 55.8 |
| Other relatives enrolled | 25 | 11.1 |
| Sibling a former pupil | 144 | 63.7 |
| Parent a former pupil | 127 | 56.2 |
| Other relatives former pupils | 29 | 12.8 |
| Child of employee/Governor | 172 | 76.1 |
| Attended a named feeder primary school (FPS) | 119 | 52.7 |
| Attended a named primary school (PS) not named as a FPS | 47 | 20.8 |
| Attended a PS in another ELB area | 4 | 1.8 |
| Attended a PS in a named area | 17 | 7.5 |
| Place of residence close to a named PS | 4 | 1.8 |
| Nearest suitable school | 25 | 11.1 |
| Applicant resident in a named area (town, district, parish etc) | 86 | 38.1 |
| Applicant resident in additional named area (town, district, parish etc) | 56 | 24.8 |
| Proximity of home to school | 146 | 64.6 |
| Random selection | 27 | 11.9 |
| Alphabetical order | 6 | 2.7 |
| Date of birth- eldest first | 43 | 19 |
| Date of birth- youngest first | 9 | 4 |
| Special circumstances | 145 | 64.2 |
| Religion | 20 | 8.8 |
| Child of mixed marriage/union | 5 | 2.2 |
| Evidence of extra curricular achievement | 5 | 2.2 |
| Proximity of parent's workplace to school | 2 | 0.9 |
| Expressed preference for single sex education | 1 | 0.4 |
| PS attendance record | 3 | 1.3 |
| Parental involvement in promoting integrated education | 2 | 0.9 |
| Interview | 2 | 0.9 |
| Siblings previously unsuccessful at random selection stage | 1 | 0.4 |
| Applicants transferring from small schools | 1 | 0.4 |
| Commitment to ethos | 3 | 1.3 |
| Irish-medium primary education | 1 | 0.4 |
| **Total number of post-primary schools** | **226** | |

Source:  Education and Library Board Transfer Books - Guide for Parents  (2004/05)

**Table 2   Criteria applied by oversubscribed post-primary schools by school type, 2004/05[1]**

| Admission criterion | Secondary[2] | | | | Grammar | | | | All Post-Primary Schools | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of schools using criterion | Number of pupils admitted | % of pupils admitted | % of schools using criterion | Number of schools using criterion | Number of pupils admitted | % of pupils admitted | % of schools using criterion | Number of schools using criterion | Number of pupils admitted | % of pupils admitted | % of schools using criterion |
| Total admissions | 27 | 3,563 | | | 53 | 7,272 | | | 80 | 10,835 | | |
| Grade in 11+ | 2 | 248 | 7.0% | 7.4% | 53 | 6,162 | 84.7% | 100.0% | 55 | 6,410 | 59.2% | 68.8% |
| Brother or sister already at school | 24 | 803 | 22.5% | 88.9% | 34 | 335 | 4.6% | 64.2% | 58 | 1,138 | 10.5% | 72.5% |
| Eldest child | 15 | 590 | 16.6% | 55.6% | 21 | 315 | 4.3% | 39.6% | 36 | 905 | 8.4% | 45.0% |
| Parent is a past pupil | 7 | 83 | 2.3% | 25.9% | 11 | 34 | 0.5% | 20.8% | 18 | 117 | 1.1% | 22.5% |
| Parent is an employee or governor of school | 7 | 13 | 0.4% | 25.9% | 10 | 13 | 0.2% | 18.9% | 17 | 26 | 0.2% | 21.3% |
| Other family connection | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2 | 6 | 0.1% | 3.8% | 2 | 6 | 0.1% | 2.5% |
| Attended feeder or named primary school | 13 | 723 | 20.3% | 48.1% | 2 | 25 | 0.3% | 3.8% | 15 | 748 | 6.9% | 18.8% |
| Lives in a named area/parish | 7 | 731 | 20.5% | 25.9% | 2 | 11 | 0.2% | 3.8% | 9 | 742 | 6.8% | 11.3% |
| Attended primary in same ELB | 1 | 28 | 0.8% | 3.7% | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1 | 28 | 0.3% | 1.3% |
| Nearest suitable school | 3 | 172 | 4.8% | 11.1% | 2 | 7 | 0.1% | 3.8% | 5 | 179 | 1.7% | 6.3% |
| Lives closest to school | 4 | 55 | 1.5% | 14.8% | 12 | 49 | 0.7% | 22.6% | 16 | 104 | 1.0% | 20.0% |
| Other geographical qualification[3] | 1 | 33 | 0.9% | 3.7% | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1 | 33 | 0.3% | 1.3% |
| Random selection | 1 | 38 | 1.1% | 3.7% | 2 | 68 | 0.9% | 3.8% | 3 | 106 | 1.0% | 3.8% |
| Alphabetical order | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Date of birth | 2 | 6 | 0.2% | 7.4% | 8 | 50 | 0.7% | 15.1% | 10 | 56 | 0.5% | 12.5% |
| Other tiebreakers[4] | 1 | 21 | 0.6% | 3.7% | 2 | 27 | 0.4% | 3.8% | 3 | 48 | 0.4% | 3.8% |
| Attended preparatory department | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 11 | 43 | 0.6% | 20.8% | 11 | 43 | 0.4% | 13.8% |
| Special circumstances | 3 | 6 | 0.2% | 11.1% | 10 | 75 | 1.0% | 18.9% | 13 | 81 | 0.7% | 16.3% |
| Religion | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1 | 1 | 0.0% | 1.9% | 1 | 1 | 0.0% | 1.3% |
| Child of mixed marriage | 1 | 1 | 0.0% | 3.7% | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1 | 1 | 0.0% | 1.3% |
| Extra curricular achievement | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2 | 4 | 0.1% | 3.8% | 2 | 4 | 0.0% | 2.5% |
| Boarder | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 5 | 28 | 0.4% | 9.4% | 5 | 28 | 0.3% | 6.3% |
| Other classifications[5] | 3 | 12 | 0.3% | 11.1% | 6 | 19 | 0.3% | 11.3% | 9 | 31 | 0.3% | 11.3% |

**Source: Admissions criteria survey of oversubscribed post-primary schools, Department of Education**

1.   Results based on a survey of oversubscribed schools
2.   Some secondary schools include a grammar stream
3.   Other geographical classification includes 'pupils domiciled in NI'
4.   Other tiebreakers include - interview and attendance record in Primary 6 and Primary 7
5.   Other classifications include - pupils opting out and being assessed by educational psychologists or by governors

**Table 3   Final Admissions Criteria Used By Oversubscribed
Post-Primary Schools 2004/05**

| Final Criterion | Grammar Schools | | Secondary Schools | | All Schools | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Distance from school, including contributory parishes, nearest suitable school, named primary schools, post-codes, preparatory department | 21 | 43.8 | 11 | 42.3 | 32 | 43.2 |
| Siblings/family connections/ eldest in the family/first girl or boy or only child | 15 | 31.3 | 9 | 34.6 | 24 | 32.4 |
| Age | 7 | 14.6 | 2 | 7.7 | 9 | 12.2 |
| Random Selection | 3 | 6.3 | 2 | 7.7 | 5 | 6.8 |
| Others including interview, attendance record, attendance at co-ed primary | 2 | 4.2 | 2 | 7.7 | 4 | 5.4 |
| **Total Number of Schools** | 48 | | 26 | | 74 | |

Source:  Admissions criteria survey of oversubscribed
post-primary schools, Department of Education

## Table 4    Distances Travelled by Pupils to Post-Primary Schools (2002/03)

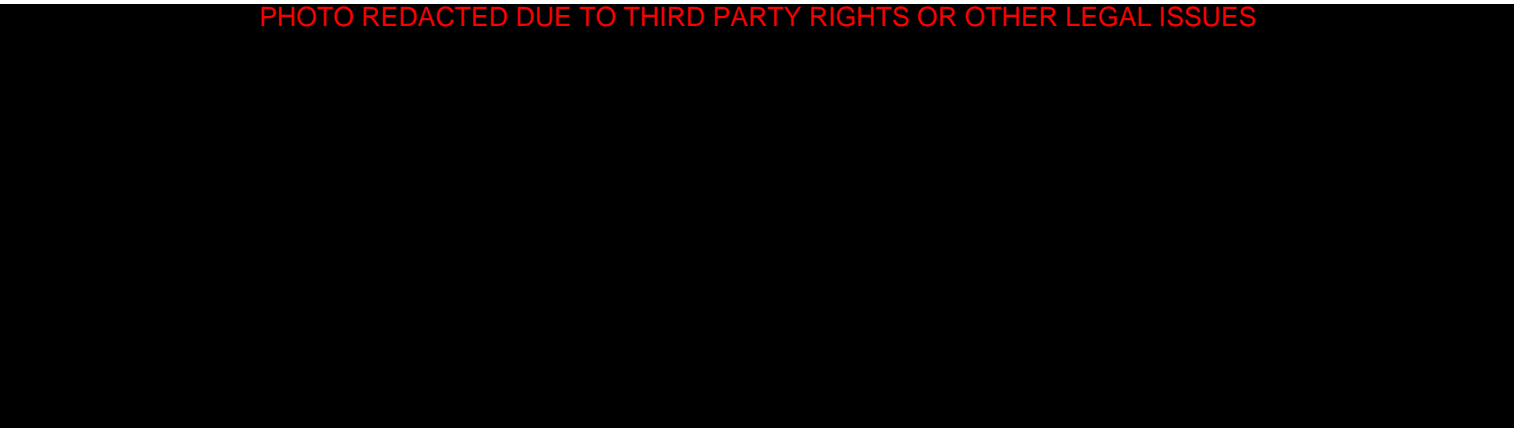| Distance travelled by pupils | Grammar Schools | | | Secondary Schools | | | All Schools | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % | Cumulative % | Number | % | Cumulative % | Number | % | Cumulative % |
| Less than 1k | 5,818 | 10 | 10 | 20,181 | 22 | 22 | 25,999 | 17 | 17 |
| Between 1k and 5k | 23,591 | 39 | 49 | 39,733 | 44 | 67 | 63,324 | 42 | 60 |
| Between 5k and 10k | 13,406 | 22 | 71 | 17,222 | 19 | 86 | 30,628 | 20 | 80 |
| Between 10k and 20k | 13,491 | 22 | 93 | 10,531 | 12 | 98 | 24,022 | 16 | 96 |
| Over 20k | 3,972 | 7 | 100 | 2,177 | 2 | 100 | 6,149 | 4 | 100 |
| Total Number of Pupils | 60,278 | 100 | | 89,844 | 100 | | 150,122 | 100 | |
| Total Number of Schools | 70 | | | 162 | | | 232 | | |

**Source:  Annual School Census 2002/03**

k = kilometres

Postcode information was missing for 5,625 pupils (3.6%)

New Admissions Arrangements for Post-Primary Schools