

PUPIL AND PARENT UNIT

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Board Circular No: 2008/120

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**To: Principals of all Primary Schools (including Royal Prep Dept)
(Copy for Information to Grammar Schools)**

Dear Principal

Re: Transfer Procedure 2008/09- Special Provision

As you are aware Special Provision exists within the Transfer Procedure (Department of Education Circular 2008/16) for children moving/recently moved to Northern Ireland i.e.:

- (i) children whose parents wish them to transfer to grammar schools from schools outside Northern Ireland; or
- (ii) children who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland.

This provision only exists for those pupils who parents wish them to attend a grammar school.

Department of Education Circular 2008/16 (Para 7.2) states that *'it will be for the grammar school concerned, within the operation of its admissions criteria, to decide whether these children should be admitted on the basis that they fall within the ability range of other pupils being admitted in that year. In making their decision, schools may wish to consider such reports and information as may be obtained from the child's previous primary school'*. The Department Circular also states that *'in ALL cases the primary school concerned, or failing that the grammar school, should request that the relevant Education and Library Board undertake an assessment of the child's ability'*. Those children coming under category (ii) above may, if their parents wish sit the Transfer Procedure tests in which case the grade obtained would also be considered.

Assessment is organised by the board's Educational Psychology Department and the purpose of this letter is to ensure that all children in need of testing are identified and to assist the board's psychologists in planning assessments in order that grammar schools have all necessary information in sufficient time for consideration of applications for admission.

I would ask you (if you have not already done so) to identify any pupil who meets either of the criteria listed above and ensure as soon as possible that the grammar school to which any such pupil wishes to seek admission is aware of the pupil(s) in order that the grammar school may request that the child be tested.

When completing the Transfer Form for such children you should indicate that Special Provision has been requested. I would also emphasise the importance, as in the completion of all Transfer Forms, for parents and principals of primary schools to study the admissions criteria of **each** grammar school to which entry is being sought to see if there is any particular information required for children being assessed under Special Provision e.g. information from the applicant's previous school.

If at any time during the transfer procedure a child arrives from outside Northern Ireland who would fall into the special provision category, please contact the Pupil and Parent Unit for advice.

Principals should provide particular support to parents from ethnic minorities or parents who have other circumstances where special help is required. The board will also make every effort to assist schools in supporting such parents and can arrange for interpreters if necessary.

Your co-operation in this matter is appreciated. If you require clarification or further advice please do not hesitate to contact me.

A copy of this circular is being issued to grammar schools for information.

Yours faithfully

Mairead Maguire (Mrs)
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MM/cm