

PUPIL AND PARENT UNIT

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To: Principals of all Controlled, Maintained and Grant Maintained Integrated Primary Schools

OPEN ENROLMENT – ADMISSION TO PRIMARY EDUCATION 2008/09

Dear Principal

I wish to advise you of the following in relation to the Open Enrolment procedure for admission to primary education in September 2008 and during the remainder of the 2008/2009 school year. The board will be issuing a separate circular in relation to admission to pre-school education.

1 BIRTH CERTIFICATES/APPLICATION FORMS

Each birth certificate should be checked and noted on the application form (OEF1). It should be retained by the school.

DO NOT SEND BIRTH CERTIFICATES AND APPLICATION FORMS TO THE BOARD UNLESS THE SCHOOL IS UNABLE TO ADMIT A CHILD. (SEE 8.3).

2 CHILDREN OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

- 2.1 On all occasions priority must be given to pupils of compulsory school age. (Those children who have reached their fourth birthday by 1 July 2008).
- 2.2 Schools must admit all pupils eligible to enter P1 (Year 1) whose parents indicate that this is their preference unless the school's admissions number or enrolment number is exceeded. Where the admission of pupils up to the admissions number or maximum admissions number will result in the enrolment number being exceeded or **a situation arises where there will be more than 30 pupils in any classes in the 4 years of Key Stage 1** contact should be made with the **Pupil and Parent Unit**. This is important, as it is not automatic that schools will be debarred from admitting all pupils.
- 2.3 Remember children in a reception class/group enrolled during the 2007/2008 school year do not have to apply for admission to P1 in your school and do not count as admissions in September 2008.

3 CHILDREN NOT OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

- 3.1 **Schools with both a reception class and a nursery class.** Parents are free to apply to both and if they so request **MUST** be given both application forms. If through the application of the school's admissions criteria the child qualifies for an offer to both reception and nursery both offers **MUST** be made. It will be for the **parents not the school** to decide which place is to be accepted.
- 3.2 **Schools are not entitled to a temporary variation for children not of compulsory school age and are also not able to go above the admissions number (ie to the maximum admissions number) if this means exceeding the enrolment number.**

4 CHILDREN FOR WHOM THE BOARD MAINTAINS A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Children for whom the board maintains a statement of special educational needs are not within the open enrolment procedure.

- They do not count towards the admissions or enrolment numbers.
- The admissions criteria do not apply to them.
- When completing form OEPS1 do not count them within any of the numbers.
- Children who are in a Learning Support Centre but for whom the board **does not** maintain a statement of special educational needs should be counted within the open enrolment numbers and recorded on OEPS1.
- Children under formal assessment of their special educational needs continue to be considered through open enrolment arrangements until the board actually makes a statement.

5 MAXIMUM CLASS SIZE - in Key Stage 1 is 30 pupils

- If a school has, for instance, an admissions number of 40 and receives 31 applications all 31 children must be admitted ie children may not be refused admission to P1 if the admissions number has not been reached. In these circumstances either classes have to be organised for P1 children so that the maximum of 30 pupils is not exceeded or the approval of the board to have more than 30 pupils is granted through contact with myself.

6 MAXIMUM ADMISSIONS NUMBER

A school does not have to admit pupils up to the maximum admissions number. This facility is available to take account of a natural variation from year to year in any particular year-group and it is only when schools wish to exceed the maximum admissions number that the specific approval of the Department of Education is required. **However, it is the board's understanding that schools are not entitled to exceed the admissions number even if within the maximum admissions number if the enrolment number is to be exceeded.** In certain circumstances the Department may approve a temporary variation in both admissions and enrolment numbers.

NB The Department, from past experience, only approves an increase in the maximum admissions number by means of temporary variation for children of compulsory school age and normally for children for whom the school is the nearest suitable school.

7 OVERSUBSCRIBED SCHOOLS

- 7.1 If principals have any particular queries please contact myself or staff in the Pupil and Parent Unit. I hope to be available to provide further detailed advice as required where the matter is particularly complex.
- 7.2 It is important that Boards of Governors carefully record how decisions are reached to identify the children to be admitted or not to be admitted. This is of assistance in providing evidence to the Appeals Tribunal should a parent lodge an appeal.

8 APPLICATION FORMS

- 8.1 (a) Please impress upon parents the importance of providing as much information on the application form or attached to it (including the verifying documents) as is relevant to their particular situation to enable Boards of Governors to determine who should be admitted. Examples include: 'nearest controlled primary school', 'living in the parish', 'brother/sister attend' and documents verifying their address or details of special circumstances as required by the school's admission criteria.
- (b) Step 4 of the Plan of Action contained in the guidance on Duty to Verify issued by the Department of Education to schools states that *'In cases where applications are not accompanied by verifying documents, it is for the Board of Governors to decide whether or not to contact the applicant to arrange for the provision of documents'*.

- (c) Providers should accept reasonable alternatives to verify how a child meets a particular criterion.
- (d) Three preferences should normally be stated to avoid delay in identifying schools for pupils. This applies **particularly** in areas where schools are likely to be oversubscribed.
- (d) Some parents who are seeking a reception place for their child have in the past stated as a first or lower preference a school which has a stated policy of not admitting children who are not of compulsory school age. Principals can help resolve this situation by either drawing the parent's attention to the fact that there is no point in having the school as a preference or suggesting that the parent reconsiders the order of preferences.
- (e) It would be helpful if principals would clarify with parents and have it recorded on the application forms what parents' wishes are in relation to under-age children who cannot be admitted to the first preference school. For instance, parents may wish to wait until the 2009/2010 school year for a place in the first preference school rather than proceed to seek places in other schools. If this is the case it should be clearly stated in the space for 2nd/3rd preferences or as part of 'Reasons for choice'.

8.2 Schools which are not oversubscribed

Application forms should be retained by the school but parents **should not be advised** of any outcome before the identified date for informing all parents. The Department has stated in its timetable that letters should be issued by schools on Friday 04 April 2008.

8.3 Schools which are oversubscribed

Step 4 of the Plan of Action contained in the guidance on Duty to Verify issued by the Department of Education to schools states that *'Applications ultimately not supported by the required verifying documents should, in line with a school's obligation to apply its admissions criteria correctly, not be considered for admission before those that are so supported'*.

Some children may not be offered a place, either because you have already reached your admissions number or because the applicants do not meet your admissions criteria. For these children the application forms, birth certificates and original verifying documents should be returned to the Pupil and Parent Unit by **Friday 1 February 2008**. These will be forwarded to the next preference provider for consideration. You may wish to consider sending these to the Board by recorded delivery to minimise the risk of loss of personal data. You are advised to keep a copy for your own reference.

Please ensure that you record on the back of the application form that the pupil has not been selected for admission. Please include your signature or that of the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

9 SECOND PREFERENCE STAGE

- 9.1 Board receives application forms from first preference schools.
- 9.2 Board forwards application forms and any original documentation which was attached to second preference schools or seeks indication of second preference from parents who have not indicated a second preference on the application form.
- 9.3 Board of Governors reapplies criteria to **all children**. Some first preference children may be displaced though this is not usual.
- 9.4 Board receives information from schools in relation to children to be admitted or not to be admitted.
- 9.5 Content of paragraph 2 Children of compulsory school age and paragraph 3 Children not of compulsory school age applies.

10 FURTHER PREFERENCE STAGES

Procedures are re-applied as in preceding paragraphs as necessary.

11 DOCUMENTATION

11.1 The following forms are enclosed:

OEPS1 – Summary of Primary Admissions

OE/PA1 – Children of Compulsory School Age – selected

OE/PA2 – Children who have **not** reached Compulsory School Age – selected

OE/PNA1 – Children who have reached Compulsory School Age – not selected

OE/PNA2 – Children who have **not** reached Compulsory School Age – not selected

Additional forms should be printed as necessary.

11.2 I suggest that schools photocopy the completed forms and any attached documentation and retain the photocopies for their records.

11.3 One copy of each completed form should be forwarded to the Pupil and Parent Unit by **Friday 1 February 2008** at the latest. Completed forms may also be e-mailed to the staff listed below (See 11.6). As the sample forms attached are locked for posting on the web copies will be sent to you by e-mail for your use.

11.4 If the school through the CLASS system or by other means produces lists similar to the above listed forms these are acceptable substitutes provided the relevant information ie numbers, names and addresses, dates of birth and postcodes are included.

11.5 I would ask you to ensure that all details entered on the forms are completed for each child in accordance with the Notes of Guidance on Recording Pupil Details in School and Education and Library Board Records issued with Board Circular 2007/84 on 5 June 2007.

11.6 **Point of Contact.** Carol Straghan in the case of Controlled schools on 3751 2520 or e-mail: carol.straghan@selb.org and Adele White in the case of other schools on 3741 0088 or e-mail: adele.white@selb.org

12 ADMISSIONS POLICY/CRITERIA

Principals are reminded that the admissions policy/criteria as published in the Board's Open Enrolment booklet and the school's prospectus are legal requirements and schools have to apply them throughout the 2008/2009 school year. Any changes can only take effect from the beginning of the 2009/2010 school year.

13 LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications received after Wednesday 23 January 2008 must be considered separately. If a school is not oversubscribed there is obviously no problem and children may be selected for admission and their details included in the documentation sent to the board. Please mark these children with an * on the relevant forms. Oversubscribed schools should refer to Department of Education Circular 2007/13 Paragraph 61 for guidance.

14 INFORMING PARENTS OF DECISIONS ABOUT APPLICATIONS

I attach copies of two exemplar letters to be used when advising parents of the school to which their child will be admitted in the 2008/2009 school year. Letter A should be used only in the case of children who are to be admitted to first preference schools. Letter B is to be issued to parents if the school to which their child is to be admitted is not the first preference school. This applies to all children whether of compulsory school age or not. Principals are free to adjust the **wording except that in Letter B the paragraph in relation to the right of appeal must remain unaltered.** The letters have been drafted in such a way as to facilitate photocopying if desired. Space has also been left for the inclusion of the address and telephone number of the school if required. As the sample letter attached is locked for posting on the web one will be sent to you by e-mail for your use.

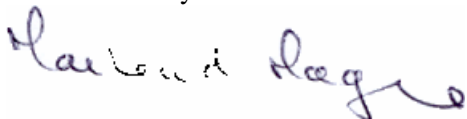
The timetable which accompanied Department Circular 2007/13 states that letters are to be issued on **Friday 4 April 2008** indicating the schools to which children will be admitted in the 2008/2009 school year. **It is extremely important that schools adhere to this timetable.** The board is aware that some schools did not inform parents at the correct time in previous years. **If a school issues letters before the stated date then parents seeking places in other local schools may be concerned that they have not received letters. If a school issues letters after the stated date there are implications for the rights of parents in lodging notice of intention to appeal.**

15 RETURN OF VERIFYING DOCUMENTS

Any original verifying documents should be returned at the close of the procedure, however if your school is oversubscribed copies of application forms and all original attached documents should be retained in case they are required for an appeal. If a parent requires an original verifying document to be returned during the procedure, she/he should be advised to contact the Pupil and Parent Unit.

Last year 4846 children applied for a reception/primary place, five appeals were heard and two upheld. Hopefully, admission to primary school will be as smooth this year. If you have any queries please contact the Pupil and Parent Unit.

Yours faithfully



Mairead Maguire (Mrs)
Head of the Pupil and Parent Unit
Direct Line (028 3751 2411)
MM/FA
Encs

SUMMARY OF PRIMARY ADMISSIONS: 2008/2009 SCHOOL YEAR

Name of School _____ School Ref. No. _____
 Enrolment Number _____ Admissions Number _____ Maximum Admissions Number _____

Do not include within the totals below any children for whom the Board maintains a statement of Special Educational Needs. THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

1. Number of children on rolls on 31 January 2008. (Do not include Reception children still to start school in the 2007/2008 school year. Include these children in 2 below.) _____
2. Number of *additional* children who it is anticipated will be enrolled by 30 June 2008 eg children who may be admitted to a reception class or group after 31 January 2008 _____
3. Number of children who it is anticipated will transfer to post primary education in September 2008. _____
4. Number of children apart from those in 3 who it is anticipated will not be on school rolls in September 2008 eg you know they are leaving the school because of a change of address. _____

Total Applications received by 23 January 2008

Compulsory School Age : _____
 Under Compulsory School Age : _____
 TOTAL: _____

Number of Children to be Admitted:-

Compulsory School Age (OE/PA1) : _____
 Under Compulsory School Age (OE/PA2) : _____
 TOTAL TO BE ADMITTED : _____

Number of Children not to be Admitted:-

* Compulsory School Age (OE/PNA1) : _____
 * Under Compulsory School Age (OE/PNA2) : _____
 TOTAL NOT TO BE ADMITTED : _____

*Application forms, birth certificates and verifying documents to be returned with this form to the Pupil and Parent Unit, Southern Education and Library Board for those children **not selected for admission not later than Friday 1 February 2008.**

Signed Date
 (Principal)

THE SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

OPEN ENROLMENT PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO PRIMARY EDUCATION 2008/2009

_____ Primary School

School Ref No: _____

Children of Compulsory School Age

The children indicated below have been selected in accordance with the Admission Policy of the School

	NAME OF PUPIL As per birth certificate in alphabetical order	D.O.B.	GENDER	ADDRESS	POSTCODE
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					

	NAME OF PUPIL As per birth certificate in alphabetical order	D.O.B.	GENDER	ADDRESS	POSTCODE
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					
31					
32					
33					
34					
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36					
37					
38					

Principal: _____

Date: _____

THE SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

OPEN ENROLMENT PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO PRIMARY EDUCATION 2008/2009

_____Primary School

School Ref No: _____

*Children who have **not** reached Compulsory School Age*

The children indicated below have been selected in accordance with the Admission Policy of the School

	NAME OF PUPIL As per birth certificate in alphabetical order	D.O.B.	GENDER	ADDRESS	POSTCODE
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					

Primary School

School Ref No: _____

	NAME OF PUPIL As per birth certificate in alphabetical order	D.O.B.	GENDER	ADDRESS	POSTCODE
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					
31					
32					
33					
34					
35					
36					
37					
38					

Principal: _____

Date: _____

THE SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

OPEN ENROLMENT PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO PRIMARY EDUCATION 2008/2009

_____ Primary School

School Ref No: _____

Children who have reached Compulsory School Age

In applying its admissions criteria the Board of Governors has **not** been able to select the children indicated below.

	NAME OF PUPIL As per birth certificate in alphabetical order	D.O.B.	GENDER	ADDRESS	POSTCODE	REASON EG CRITERION 5 - DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
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7						
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10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						

	NAME OF PUPIL As per birth certificate in alphabetical order	D.O.B.	GENDER	ADDRESS	POSTCODE	REASON EG CRITERION 5 - DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL
19						
20						
21						
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31						
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37						
38						

Principal: _____ Date: _____

THE SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

OPEN ENROLMENT PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO PRIMARY EDUCATION 2008/2009

_____ Primary School

School Ref No: _____

*Children who have **not** reached Compulsory School Age*

In applying its admissions criteria the Board of Governors has **not** been able to select the children indicated below.

	NAME OF PUPIL As per birth certificate in alphabetical order	D.O.B.	GENDER	ADDRESS	POSTCODE	REASON EG CRITERION 5 - DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL
1						
2						
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	NAME OF PUPIL As per birth certificate in alphabetical order	D.O.B.	GENDER	ADDRESS	POSTCODE	REASON EG CRITERION 5 - DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL
19						
20						
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Principal: _____ Date: _____

4 April 2008

To the Parent(s) of: _____

ADMISSION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL: 2008/2009 SCHOOL YEAR

Dear Parent(s)

I am pleased to inform you that your son/daughter is to be admitted to this school in the 2008/2009 school year. I would like to welcome your child and trust that he/she will have many happy and beneficial experiences whilst attending our school. I will be communicating further with you at a later date to advise you of the actual arrangements for admission.

Yours faithfully

PRINCIPAL

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4 April 2008

To the Parent(s) of: _____

ADMISSION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL: 2008/20089 SCHOOL YEAR

Dear Parent(s)

I am pleased to inform you that your son/daughter is to be admitted to this school in the 2008/2009 school year. I would like to welcome your child and trust that he/she will have many happy and beneficial experiences whilst attending our school. I will be communicating further with you at a later date to advise you of the actual arrangements for admission.

Since this school was not stated as your first preference I am required to inform you that you have the right to refer to an Independent Appeal Tribunal a complaint that the criteria for selecting pupils for admission to a school or schools were not applied, or not correctly applied. It is important that any such complaint is lodged with the board by *Wednesday 16 April 2008 as you will lose your right of appeal if you lodge your complaint after that date.* Separate appeals may be lodged where a child has been refused admission to more than one school.

Full details of the procedure to be followed may be obtained through writing to Mrs M Maguire, Head of the Pupil and Parent Unit, Southern Education and Library Board, 3 Charlemont Place, The Mall, ARMAGH, BT61 9AX or by telephoning Mrs E Reaney at Board Headquarters, telephone (028) 3751 2406.

Yours faithfully

PRINCIPAL

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