

Subject:**PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION ON
APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS****Circular Number:****1994/19****Date of Issue:**

23 August 1994

Target Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of all grant-aided schools;
- Education and Library Boards;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

Summary of Contents:

This Circular contains advice about the requirements on schools to publish information on applications and admissions in their prospectuses.

Enquiries:

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Governor Awareness:

Essential

Status of Contents:Advice
Information for schools**Related Documents:**

SR 1993 No.370, SR 1994 No.315

Superseded Documents:

None

Expiry Date:

Not applicable

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Introduction

1. In September 1993 the Department issued a paper seeking comments on its proposals for the publication, in school prospectuses, of annual information on applications and actual subsequent admissions to schools. These proposals were advanced in the context of the Citizen's Charter Programme and the Parents' Charter which emphasise the importance of extending the range of information available to enable those using public services to make their own, better informed, choices.

2. The proposals in the paper were as follows:-

School prospectuses prepared for the 1995/96 school year and thereafter should include:-

- i. the number of applications received in the previous 2 years and, in the case of grammar schools only, this should be shown by transfer procedure grades.
- ii. the numbers admitted each year and, in the case of grammar schools only, this should be shown by transfer procedure grades.

Responses

3. The consultation period ended on 31 December 1993 with a total of 46 responses having been received, 35 of these being from individual schools (17 primary schools, 7 secondary schools and 11 grammar schools) and 11 from other bodies.

4. A variety of comments were received both in support of and in opposition to the proposals. Those opposed to the proposals mainly argued that the information could be misleading, but the Department remains of the view that parents will find such information helpful and, after consideration, has decided to proceed with the proposals, subject to minor amendments which are set out below.

Amendments to the Proposals

i. Period to be Covered.

5. Those in favour of the proposals argued that the value of the information would be enhanced by increasing the number of years for which it was provided thus allowing short term "swings" and established trends to be more clearly identified. A period of at least 3 years was suggested. Those opposed to the proposal also felt that the period of 2 years was too short to be beneficial. In light of the comments received the Department has decided that the information should be provided for a 3 year, rather than 2 year, period. However, the introduction of this requirement will be phased and the full requirement will not apply until the 1996/97 school year - see paragraph 10. There will not be any restriction as to the maximum number of years and schools may provide the information for more than 3 years if they wish.

ii Should Boards also publish the information?

6. In response to consultation, it was suggested that Education and Library Boards should also provide the information collectively for all schools in their areas in their Primary and Secondary Education booklets. One

Board has already taken steps towards this end and the Department accepts that this would be an effective way to disseminate the information. Boards are, therefore, being asked to include this information in their Primary and Secondary Education booklets. This is in addition to the requirement on schools to publish the information in prospectuses.

Exceptions

7. As pupils in the Craigavon area transfer to Lurgan College, Portadown College, and St Michael's High School, Lurgan at age 14 and their transfer depends on performance in the junior high schools rather than transfer procedure grades those three grammar schools will not be required to record their application and enrolment numbers by transfer procedure grade.

What constitutes an application?

8. Responses to the consultation paper indicated that schools required clarification as to what should be regarded as an application. For the purposes of these proposals only parental preferences which are **actually considered** by the Board of Governors should be regarded as applications received.

Conclusion

9. The Department has made Regulations (the Education (School Information and Prospectuses) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994 SR 1994 No 315) requiring primary and secondary schools to include in their prospectuses the following information about applications and admissions:-

- the number of applications received in each of the previous 3 years; in the case of grammar schools this is to be shown by transfer procedure grade;
- the numbers of pupils admitted in each of those years; in the case of grammar schools this is to be shown by transfer procedure grade.

10. This requirement will be phased in over the next 3 years as follows:-

1994/95

Prospectuses published during the 1994/95 school year (relating to admissions in the 1995/96 school year).

- the information relating to applications received and pupils admitted in the 1994/95 school year.

1995/96

Prospectuses published during the 1995/96 school year (relating to admissions in the 1996/97 school year).

- the information relating to applications received and pupils admitted in the 1994/95 and 1995/96 school years.

1996/97

Prospectuses published during the 1996/97 school year (relating to admissions in the 1997/98 school year).

- the information relating to applications received and pupils admitted in the 1994/95, 1995/96 and 1996/97 school years.

In subsequent years the information to be published will relate to applications received and pupils admitted in the previous 3 years.

11. The Department proposes to amend the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 to require Education and Library Boards to publish this information in their Primary and Secondary Education booklets. In the meantime Boards are being invited to publish this information in their booklets.

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