

Subject:

**CHILD PROTECTION: PRE- EMPLOYMENT
CHECKING OF PERSONS TO WORK IN
SCHOOLS – NEW ARRANGEMENTS**

**Circular Number:
2008/03**

**Date of Issue:
13 March 2008**

Target Audience:

For Information and Action:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of Grant-Aided Schools
- Education and Library Boards
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

For Information Only

- Association of Governing Bodies of Grammar Schools;
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education;
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta;
- Proprietors of Independent Schools
- Teacher Unions, NIPSA and UNISON

Summary of Contents:

From 1 April 2008 responsibility for undertaking criminal history background checks transfers from PSNI Criminal Records Office to a new organisation called AccessNI. This Circular sets out the process which all grant-aided schools must use to request pre-employment criminal history background checks on prospective employees, volunteers and school governors from that date. Other changes to apply from that date are covered in this Circular.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

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**Governor Awareness:
Essential**

Status of Contents:
Information, Guidance and
Implementation for schools

**Related Documents:
Circular 2006/6
Circular 2006/25**

Superseded Documents:
DOR 02

Expiry Date:
Not applicable

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<http://www.deni.gov.uk>

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Introduction

1. Plans are in preparation to minimise the possibility that unsuitable persons can work or have access to children or vulnerable adults. The planned changes cover vetting before taking up employment, monitoring while in employment to ensure continued suitability and barring from employment following a relevant conviction or misconduct. This Circular deals with the first of these changes – new arrangements for checking a person’s criminal history background.
2. At 1 April 2008 the criminal background checking service provided by PSNI Criminal Records Office will transfer to a new organisation called AccessNI. The service which AccessNI will have some key differences, in particular:
 - Three different levels of checking – basic, standard and enhanced disclosure – will be available. Only prospective employers can ask for a standard or an enhanced disclosure;
 - The identity of the person must be verified before an application is made for a disclosure about criminal background;
 - A fee is payable for every disclosure completed; and
 - Applications for a standard or enhanced disclosure will only be accepted by AccessNI from a registered body, that is, an organisation formally registered with it for that purpose.
3. This Circular sets out the process which the Department has put in place to allow grant-aided schools to have pre-employment criminal background checks on prospective employees, volunteers and school governors completed and paid for. The arrangements are intended to keep change to the current system to a minimum and to pay for all completed checks centrally.

Please note: The arrangements contained in this Circular apply unless a school has received other instructions from the relevant employing authority.

How will the new process work?

4. In brief, the process will be as follows:
 - The prospective employee, volunteer or school governor completes a Disclosure Certificate Application Form (formerly the DOR Form);
 - The identity of the applicant is verified by the school’s Principal and an Identity Verification Form is signed to that effect;
 - The Disclosure Certificate Application Form and Identity Verification Form are sent to the appropriate registered body (the relevant Education and Library Board, the Council for Catholic Maintained

Schools or the Department depending on school management type and position);

- The registered body endorses the Disclosure Certificate Application Form and forwards it to AccessNI;
- AccessNI will carry out the check and issue a Disclosure Certificate to both the registered body and the applicant;
- The registered body will be billed by AccessNI for Disclosure Certificates which have been issued: and
- The bill will be passed to the Department for payment.

What type of disclosure is needed for working in schools?

5. From 1 April 2008 all persons joining a school's staff, including volunteers and governors will require an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate. An Enhanced Disclosure Certificate shows the details of spent and unspent convictions and cautions as well as any other relevant information held in police records or other law enforcement agencies. This can include information about attempted prosecutions that were unsuccessful or behaviour that might be indicative of criminal activity.

When should an application for an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate be made?

6. An application for an Enhanced Disclosure will be made by the Employing Authority as soon as the candidate has been recommended for appointment. As an Enhanced Disclosure requires a more detailed background search it will take AccessNI a minimum of 4 weeks to complete. You should allow at least 6 weeks for this particular stage in the Recruitment and Selection process.
7. The applicant (the person to be checked) must complete a Disclosure Certificate Application Form. This form can be found at www.accessni.gov.uk. The applicant should complete Parts B and C.

Please note: All requests for criminal background checks submitted from 17 March 2008 must use the new Disclosure Certificate Application Form.

How is an applicant's identity verified?

8. The Principal of a school is responsible for verifying the identity of the applicant. Three documents must be produced in the name of the applicant and at least one of these should include photographic identification. Details of documents which are valid for identification purposes can be found in Appendix B.
9. The Principal must sign and date an Identity Verification Form for the recommended candidate to confirm that the identity has been verified. A specimen form is shown at Appendix C.
10. Disclosure Certificate Application Form and the Identify Verification Form should then be sent to the appropriate Registered Body.

Which Registered Body should be used?

11. The school management type and the occupation determine which registered body should be used. The details are in the following table;-

School Management Type	Position/ Occupation	Registered Body	Contact
Controlled	Teaching and Non-teaching	Relevant Education and Library Board	Head of Human Resources
Catholic Maintained	Teachers	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Head of Human Resources
Catholic Maintained	Non teaching staff	Relevant Education and Library Board	Head of Human Resources
Other maintained including Irish medium	Teaching and non-teaching staff	Relevant Education and Library Board	Head of Human Resources
Integrated (grant-maintained)	Teaching and Non-teaching	Department of Education	Teachers' Pay and Pensions Branch
Voluntary Grammar School			

Like more information about AccessNI?

Full information about AccessNI and all aspects of the service on offer, together with downloadable versions of the application can be found at www.accessni.gov.uk

APPENDIX B

VALIDATION OF IDENTIFICATION – ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTS

Three documents must be produced in the name of the applicant; one from Group 1 and two from Group 2. If this is not possible, then 5 documents from Group 2 must be produced. At least one document must include photographic identification.

Group 1	Group 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid passport (any nationality) • UK Driving Licence – Full or Provisional – England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of man: either photocard or paper(a photocard is only valid if accompanied with the paper counterpart) • Original UK Birth Certificate (issued within 12 months of the date of birth, full or short form acceptable) • Valid photo identity card (EU countries only) • UK Firearms Licence • HM Forces ID Card (UK) • Adoption Certificate (UK) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage certificate/Civil Partnership Certificate • Non-original UK Birth Certificate (issued after 12 months from date of birth, full or short form acceptable) • P45/P60 Statement • Utility Bill (includes mobile phone contract/bill) • Valid TV licence • Credit Card Statement • Store Card Statement • Mortgage Statement • Valid insurance certificate • Certificate of British nationality • British work permit/visa** • Asylum Registration Card • AccessNI Disclosure certificate • Personal Correspondence or a document from a Government department* • Bank or Building Society Document ** • Financial Statement ** • Valid vehicle registration document • Mail order catalogue statement* • Court summons • Valid NHS Card • Court Claim Form • Addressed payslip* • National Insurance Number card • Examination Certificate • Letter from a school Principal* • Child Benefit Book • Smart Pass

Note:

* documentation must be less than 3 months old

** documentation must be issued within the last 12 months

APPENDIX C

APPLICATION FOR AN ENHANCED DISCLOSURE APPLICATION

IDENTITY VERIFICATION FORM

Part 1- Details of Applicant

<p>Name (Capitals):</p> <p>Name of School:</p> <p>Address of School:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Position Applied For:</p>
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Part 2 – Declaration

I confirm that I have verified by use of photographic identification and supporting documentation, in line with the requirements of AccessNI, the identity of the above named person.

Signed : Date:
(Principal)

School:

Address.....
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