

EDUCATION MINISTER PRESENTS PROPOSALS TO EXECUTIVE COLLEAGUES

Education Minister, Caitríona Ruane, has presented her proposals on post primary transfer to her colleagues on the Executive.

The Minister's proposals are a result of consultation with educationalists, teacher unions and other key participants, which she has been taking forward since her announcement in early December.

Speaking after the Executive meeting, the Minister said: **“My proposals aim to ensure that no child needlessly suffers as a result of an antiquated system of selection for post primary school. They aim to enable children and their parents to select a school at 11 based on non academic criteria and making informed choices on their educational pathway at 14, much in the same way they do now when electing GCSE subjects.**

“The ending of academic selection will mean equality in educational provision and opportunity for all children. The system must be about delivering quality education, including excellence in both academic and vocational subjects.

“In order to manage this process of change I am proposing a three year phased approach which will allow schools time to adapt to the new system. Schools will be able to operate on a bilateral basis, taking pupils through both academic and non academic criteria. It is my hope that only a minority of schools will apply to use academic selection.”

The Minister's proposals would follow the following timeline:

- In September 2009, pupils will transfer on the basis of the current 11 Plus system for the last time.
- In September 2010, pupils will begin to use the new arrangements to transfer to post primary school at 11 on the basis of non academic admissions criteria. To facilitate transition, schools can apply for the option of admitting by academic selection on a limited basis. In 2010, this will permit selection for up to 50% of a school's intake.
- In September 2011, the ratio of intake will become 30% academic, 70% non-academic
- In September 2012, the ratio of intake will become 20% academic, 80% non-academic
- In September 2013, all admissions will be on the basis of non academic criteria. These can include:

Geography

- Parish
- Catchment area
- Nearest suitable school

Family

- Currently attending sibling only
- Eldest / first child

Community

- Feeder primary

Social disadvantage

- Looked after children
- Children entitled to Free School Meals

Tie Breakers, such as Random Selection

The Minister concluded; **“To implement all the proposals detailed above I will begin a robust legislative process, which will include public consultation and an Assembly vote.**

“I believe these changes are essential if we are to develop an education system that meets the needs of all our young people and prepares them for the challenges of today’s society.”

Notes to editors:

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