

To:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of all Grant-Aided Schools;
- Proprietors of Independent Schools;
- Education and Library Boards;
- The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA); and
- Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team (ESAIT)

16 December 2009

The Department has today issued a revision of the post-primary admissions Circular that it previously issued on 7 September, 2009. This new revision entirely supersedes and replaces that issued on 7 September, 2009.

For ease of reference, the important revisions affect the Transfer Form for Transfer 2010, as attached at Annex 3 of the revised Circular. **The new Transfer Form has been revised from the version issued as an illustrative specimen as part of the 7 September, 2009 Circular.** The new Transfer Form and its accompanying materials have, firstly, been revised more clearly to reflect the Department's policy on academic admissions criteria.

This new Transfer Form has also been revised so that it does not require primary school principals to provide their signature on the Transfer Form. This means that primary school principals will not now be requested by the Transfer Form to verify parents' claims of Free-School-Meal-Entitlement registration as these are entered on the Transfer Form. Instead, the verification of such claims will be provided by Education and Library Board/ ESA officers as these claims are received by them. The Form will enable ELB/ESA verification of these claims to be recorded on Transfer Forms so that this information is available to post-primary schools when they receive the Transfer Forms within the applications process.

It should be understood that these changes represent no reduction of the important role that primary school principals should play in providing advice, guidance and practical help (e.g. the dispatch of Transfer Forms to the ELBs)

equally to all parents in respect of their applications to all of their post-primary preferences.

The changes outlined above have meant, in particular, important revisions to Section 9 of the Circular. These changes reflect the fact that post-primary schools will now receive Transfer Forms (from March 19, 2010) that contain ELB/ESA verification of a parent's claim of FSME registration on behalf of their child. For the purpose of applying criteria, post-primary schools should only treat those applications that have been verified by the ELB/ESA as FSME registered applicants (having considered Step 2 of the Action Plan provided within the Duty to Verify Guidance). Otherwise, the revisions to Section 9 describe and reflect these changes in detail.

This change in approach has also required changes to the guidance for primary principals on information and advice to parents (Annex 2), changes to the Transfer Form (Annex 3) and changes to the Duty to Verify Guidance (Annex 4). Schools should note these revisions.

Otherwise, revisions are confined to those required by any developments occurring since 7 September, 2009 and needing to be reflected in this revised Circular. These are in the main:

- revisions required by the Department's communications of 9 November, 2009 (and in particular the new 4 December, 2009 deadline for amendments to post-primary schools' Transfer Booklet entries);
- the facility for post-primary Transfer Forms to be completed in Irish;
- changes to the wording the Department recommends for schools using the FSME Criterion (already communicated to school through the ELBs);
- and changes to the Exceptional Circumstances section of the Circular (Section 11).

SCHOOL ACCESS TEAM
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION