



Enrolling your child for School

Choosing a school is an important decision and making the right choice for you and your child will involve research and planning.

There are several types of schools at both primary and secondary levels:

- Controlled schools – looked after by the Education and Library Boards
- Voluntary Maintained schools – are owned by Trustees, in most cases representatives of Roman Catholic parishes, and managed by Boards of Governors
- Voluntary Grammar schools
- Grant maintained integrated schools that take children of any religious denomination

When choosing a nursery place or school for your child there are several sources of information to help you make your decision.

Many schools hold open days and evenings where you can meet the staff and see children's work or you could make an appointment to visit the school at another time, and ask to talk to the Head teacher.

Parents can express their preference for the school they wish their child to attend and schools admit pupils up to an approved admissions number (which is decided by the Department of Education NI) Popular schools will often receive more applications than there are places available. Therefore parental preference will be limited by the maximum intake of the school. This is why it is important to make 3 choices of schools in order of preference when submitting your child's application form and that you enrol your child on the advertised date for submitting application form. (Contact your local board for further details)

Your local board produces each year a booklet listing all the schools in your area. The booklet will tell you

- Information on individual schools
- Schools admission criteria
- Timetables for enrolment

Contact Numbers for Education and Library Boards and other useful number are as follows:

Belfast Education and Library Board:	Tel: 028 90564000
North Eastern Education and Library Board	Tel: 028 25653333
South Eastern Education and Library Board	Tel: 028 90566200
Southern Education and Library Board	Tel: 028 37512200
Western Education and Library Board	Tel: 028 82411411
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Tel: 028 90426972
Department of Education	Tel: 028 91279279

Pre-School Admissions

Procedures for application for nursery places differ from those for primary and post primary, funded pre-school education is available in statutory nursery settings and in those voluntary playgroups and private day nurseries

participating in the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme. Priority in admissions is given to children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and to those with July/August birthdays (who will be the oldest 4 year olds)

A single application form enables parents to list their order of preferences of available providers. The form when completed is to be given to the first preference provider. For further information on where free preschool education places are located in your area and for copies of application forms, and the crucial timetable of events for applications you can contact your local Education and Library Board.

Prior to completing the form be sure to read the Admissions Criteria of the schools/playgroups/private nurseries which you are nominating as preferences. If you are claiming priority because of social disadvantage you must take the form to your local Social Security Officer to be stamped and certified by the Social Security Agency.

There is a Timetable of arrangements for admissions as follows:

- The closing date for receipt of parents' applications to first preference pre-school/primary school is mid-January.
- At the beginning of May parents will receive a letter by providers advising the setting for which their child has been accepted or the board will advise parents whose children have not been offered a place with advise on where places may still be available.
- Mid May is when the final date for appeals on admissions decisions is to be received by the board.

How to make application for enrolment in primary school

If your child is 4 years old on or before 1st July they will start school that academic year.

Application forms, notes of guidance are available from any nursery school, primary school, library in your board area or the Transfer/Open Enrolment Office.

Before completing the application form you should carefully read the notes of guidance and the information about individual schools and their admissions criteria which will be in your board booklet on 'Open Enrolment in Primary Schools'

Be sure to supply all information required on the application form and state three preferences of schools in order of preference.

If more children apply to a school than there are places, the board of governors will apply their admissions criteria and may not be able to offer your child a place. If this is the case your child's application will be forwarded to the second preference and if necessary the third. Where the board finds a child has not been offered a place on their preferred list the parents would be contacted for further preferences.

For further information about school admissions you should contact the principal of your first preference school.

Timetable for enrolments:

- Beginning of December - Boards publish information about Primary Schools
- Mid-January – Closing date for receipt of parents' applications to first preference primary schools

- February to mid March – Schools select pupils at first, second, third and further preference stages
- Beginning of April – Parents receive letters advising which primary school their child has been accepted.
- Mid April – Is when an intention to appeal against primary schools admission decision is to be received by Boards.

Transfer to Post-Primary Education

At present children in their final year of primary education may take the transfer procedure tests. The results of which are used by grammar schools to select children for admission. No pupil is guaranteed a grammar school place, when selecting your preferred schools it is important that you have read the admissions criteria of your chosen schools. This selection method is set to change in 2010 and the last year for sitting the transfer tests will be 2008. Pupils do not need to take the tests if they are to attend a Secondary School. If your child has a statement of special educational needs from the board, he or she does not sit the tests: the board will discuss a post-primary placement with you as part of the statementing review process.

Timetable for the Transfer Procedure:

- Beginning September – Parents to return forms opting if their child is to be in or out of the tests
- Mid November – The first main test takes place with a start time of 10.00am
- 2 weeks later in November – The second main test takes place at 10.00am
- Mid December – The supplementary test takes place
- Start of February – Boards post notification of Transfer Test results to parents
- Early to Mid February – Primary School Principals discuss Transfer Form and preferences with Parents
- End of February – CCEA to have received requests for re-marks
- Early March – Board provides post-primary schools with the Transfer Forms of first preference
- Middle May – Issue by the Board of letters advising parents of the school for which their child has been accepted.
- Early June – Board to receive notice of intention to appeal admission decisions

(Please note that the exact dates for timetable are not able to be provided because they have yet to be confirmed for the coming academic year however the order in which enrolment happens is accurate)

Appeals

If your child fails to gain admission to your preferred school and you consider that this is because the school did not apply its admissions criteria, or applied them incorrectly, you can appeal to your local board which will set up an appeals tribunal.

If you would like help with any family issue, please ring Parents Advice Centre for guidance and support on freephone 0808 8010 722 or email parents@pachelp.org