

School Admissions Policy

Time to Act!

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Ian O'Herlihy, Partner & Head of Employment & Benefits, Mason Hayes & Curran

Catherine Kelly, Senior Associate, Employment & Benefits, Mason Hayes & Curran

Liam Riordan, Partner, Employment & Benefits, Mason Hayes & Curran



Key Dates

- 30 April: Submit Draft Admission Policy (DAP)
(Must consult parents & staff)
- 15 September: Patron approval
- 29 September: If modified (DAP) required
- 1 October: Schools may commence operation of admission policy

Education Act 1998

Section 15(2)(d):

“A Board of Management shall publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school...”



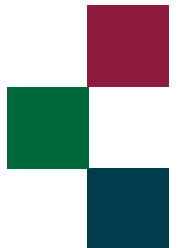
Education Act 1998

Section 15(2)(b):

“A Board of Management is accountable to the Patron for upholding the “characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school...”

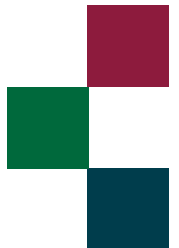
Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018

- 1st February 2020
- S.(62) The Admission Policy
- S.(63) The Annual Admission Notice
- Circular 0007/2020-Templates



Oversubscription

- Discretion given to schools but be careful as there cannot be discrimination
- Can you prioritise?
- Siblings, children of former students?
- Children of staff?



Admission Policy

- Publication of Admission Policy no earlier than 1st September 2020
- October 1st earliest date for school to start admission process prior to year pupil is to start
- Parents must be alert to the process after this date
- Policy must include a non-discriminatory Admission Statement (9 grounds)

Mandatory Aspects of Admission Policy

- All applicants shall be admitted unless:
 - (a) School is full
 - (b) Parents fail to give a written undertaking to accept the Code of Behaviour
- Can we continue to use exceptional circumstances clause in relation to;
 - Health & Safety ?
 - Special Educational Needs?

The Annual Admission Notice

- Will set out for the school year concerned
 - (a) Number of places being made available in the intake group
 - (b) In the case of a school with a special class, the number of places being made available in the special class concerned
 - (c) How the admission policy and enrolment forms can be obtained.

The Annual Admission Notice

- (d) The date on which the school shall begin and end accepting applications (3 week minimum)
- (e) The period during which the applicant shall be notified of the decision in relation to their application (3 week maximum)
- (f) The period during which the applicant shall confirm acceptance of the offer of admission

The Annual Admission Notice

The Practicalities

- In any case where offers of admission have been accepted prior to 1st February 2020, the school should set out the number of such offers and acceptances in the annual notice.
- Application forms should be available on the school website no later than a week before accepting applications and on written request.

What are the Prohibitions?

- Accepting applications in advance of 1st October
- Requirements of parents to attend for interview
- Academic ability of child (exception-special class/school)
- A cap of 25% on children/grandchildren of past pupils (siblings ok)
- Feeder Schools?







Schools must

- (a) Provide a waiting list maintained in priority order and valid for a school year
- (b) Set out procedures if 2 or more pupils are tied for a place
- (c) Provide reasons for refusal and give number on waiting list
- (d) Inform unsuccessful applicant that they may appeal in first instance to BOM and afterwards to the DES in S.29 appeal.

Parents must

- When accepting an offer of admission
- Indicate if they have accepted another offer & if so provide the details of the other school
- Whether or not they have applied and if they are awaiting confirmation of offer

Data Protection

- Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a patron or another board of management with a list of the students in relation to whom—
- (i) an application for admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an offer of admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an offer of admission to the school has been accepted.
- a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number

Refusal/Withdrawal of Offer

- Information contained in application is false or misleading in a material respect
- An applicant fails to confirm acceptance of offer on or before date in admission notice
- Failure to accept in writing the Code of Behaviour
- Refuse to provide details about other offers/applications

Special Classes

- Entitled to ask for reports
- Obligation to accept pupils during the school year if there is capacity

SEN applicants likely to apply to mainstream & special class

NCSC must approve any change of designation

Can invite parents & pupils to interview, but no obligation to attend

Right to opt out of religious instruction

- Must be included in policy
- Constitutional and legal position
- Religious instruction; religious formation; religious education
- Practical implications
- Resources and implications

Article 44.2.4 – Irish Constitution

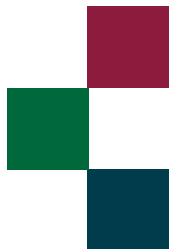
Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school.

Minority Religions

- Priority Criteria:
- Applicant who is a member of a minority religion
- School provides religious instruction/education to accommodate
- Evidence required-Baptismal cert
- Not applicable to special classes

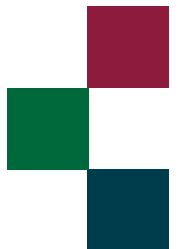
Conclusion

- This Act has yet to be road-tested!
- Greater clarity will emerge from:
 - Section 29 appeals
 - Judicial Review









Takeaway

- BOM approve (DAP) for consultation
- Consultation with parents/staff
- BOM consider feedback
- BOM forward final (DAP) to Patron



Further Reading

- Recent MHC Education Team Ezines:
 - Have you got your Admission Policy in Place? 
 - Teachers & SNAs to Help Deliver Essential Public Services? 
 - Tech Savvy Teachers Working From Home During Covid-19 Crisis 

Thank you

Questions?



Liam Riordan

+353 1 614 2413

lriordan@mhc.ie



Ian O'Herlihy

+353 1 614 2434

ioherlihy@mhc.ie



Catherine Kelly

+353 1 614 5838

ckelly@mhc.ie