

Admission to Post-Primary Education Transfer 2017

A Guide for Parents

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Sources of information

Information on post-primary schools can be accessed on the EA website at www.eani.org.uk/admissions. Here you will find a schools directory which you can search to identify all the post-primary schools in your area. You can view, download or print the admissions criteria of the post-primary schools in which you are interested.

A reference booklet containing admissions criteria for the post-primary schools in each area of the EA is available in primary schools, post-primary schools and in public libraries.

The Department of Education advice leaflet on the post-primary transfer process for parents of primary six children can be accessed at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/advice-parents-children-primary-6>. If you require this document in other formats or in another language please contact the School Admissions Team at the Department of Education.

Glossary of terms used in this document

Admissions criteria	The criteria drawn up by the board of governors of each school and applied in order to select the pupils to be admitted where the school is over-subscribed.
Admissions number	The maximum number of pupils, which a school is allowed to admit into Form 1 (Year 8) as determined by the Department of Education.
Appeal tribunal	A tribunal set up by the EA but independent of it, which hears appeals lodged by parents against the decisions made by the board of governors.
Capital fee	A fee, approved by the Department of Education, which voluntary grammar schools require each parent to pay to the school towards the capital cost of running it. The fee varies from school to school. Other secondary schools do not make this charge.
Controlled schools	Schools managed and funded by the EA, through boards of governors. The boards of governors consist of representatives of transferors – mainly the protestant churches - along with representatives of parents, teachers and EA.
DE	Department of Education.
EA	Education Authority.
Enrolment number	The maximum number of pupils which a school may have on its register at any time, as determined by the Department of Education.
FSME	Free school meals entitlement.
Integrated schools	Schools managed by a board of governors consisting of trustees or foundation governors along with parents and DE representatives. These schools seek to add value to the education process by inviting protestants and catholics to come together with other traditions in order to improve their understanding of one another, their own cultures, religions and values.
Irish-medium schools	Schools or units within schools where teaching and learning takes place through the Irish language.
Maintained schools	Schools managed by a board of governors nominated by trustees – mainly catholic - along with parents, teachers, DE and EA representatives.
Parent	The person who has legal custody of the child.
Voluntary grammar schools	Schools managed by a board of governors. The board of governors is constituted in accordance with each school's scheme of management – usually representatives of foundation governors, parents, teachers and in most cases DE or EA representatives.

The Transfer Procedure

1) Introduction

The age groups eligible to transfer to post-primary education in September 2017 are:-

The normal age group which comprises pupils who have attained the age of 11 years by 1 July 2017, ie pupils with dates of birth from 2 July 2005 to 1 July 2006, inclusive;

and exceptionally

- (a) *underage pupils* who will attain the age of 11 years by 1 July 2018, ie pupils with dates of birth from 2 July 2006 to 1 July 2007 inclusive, where the board of governors has decided in accordance with the arrangements in circular 1996/24 (amended) that he/she should transfer to post-primary education a year earlier than normal; or
- (b) *overage pupils* who in 2016/17 have remained in primary school for one additional year beyond the normal age of transfer where the board of governors has decided in accordance with the arrangements in circular 1996/24 (amended) that he/she should remain in primary education during the 2016/17 school year.

The pupils described in (a) and (b) above will be permitted to transfer in the same way as normal age pupils.

This document sets out the main steps in the post-primary transfer process for September 2017 admissions (Transfer 2017). It then explains:

- The role of parents: what you can do to help your child transfer to post-primary school;
- How parents can prepare for this role: what things to consider when choosing a school for your child; and
- How parents complete their child's application (the transfer form) to post-primary school.

Pupils with a statement of special educational needs have a separate transfer process. The post-primary school placement is discussed with the parent as part of the review of the child's statement.

2) Main steps in the transfer 2017 process

November 2016 - February 2017

You will be able to visit schools on their open days/evenings. Details of dates and times can be found in the regional booklet available on the EA website or directly from schools.

You can also ask any post-primary school to supply you with a free copy of its prospectus. This will contain additional information.

January – early February 2017

Your child's primary school will provide you with a transfer form and guidance notes to help you complete the form.

On the transfer form you will be asked to list, in order of preference, the post-primary schools (at least four) which you would like your child to attend.

Friday
10 February 2017

When you have completed and signed the transfer form it should be forwarded by your primary school to reach the EA by 10 February 2017.

Wednesday
15 March 2017

The EA process transfer forms according to parental preference. On 15 March 2017 your form will be passed to the school named as a first preference so that it can apply its admissions criteria based on the information provided. The form may need to be passed to other schools named as preferences before the process is complete.

Not later than
4pm Wednesday
3 May 2017

The final date/time by which the EA will process new applications/additional information or changes of preference in exceptional circumstances is 4pm on Wednesday 3 May 2017. Any new applications/additional information or changes of preference in exceptional circumstances received after this date will not be processed until after the issue of the placement letters.

Friday
19 May 2017

A letter informing you which post-primary school your child has been placed at will be posted on Friday 19 May 2017.

If your child has not been accepted by any of the schools listed on the transfer form, you will be asked to nominate other schools drawn from a list of schools with places still available.

These letters will also advise on how you can appeal against an admissions decision.

Saturday
20 May 2017
3.30pm - 5pm

If your placement letter does not arrive on Saturday 20 May 2017 you can contact the EA between the hours of 3.30pm and 5pm. Staff will be available to confirm placement details *only*. Contact details are included in this document.

Not later than
4pm on Monday
5 June 2017

The final date and time you can appeal against an admission decision is 4pm on Monday 5 June 2017.

3) The role of the primary school

Primary school principals have a role in advising parents of primary seven children about the transfer procedure leading to the completion of the transfer form. All essential transfer documents aimed at parents will be distributed through the primary schools.

4) The role of the Education Authority

The EA does not place children in post-primary schools (except children for whom it is maintaining statements of special educational needs) but will administer and co-ordinate the transfer procedure arrangements and will facilitate the expression of parental preferences. The EA will not be involved in any aspect of the administration of a post-primary school's unregulated entrance test. The EA has the duty to publish particulars of the arrangements for the admission of children to schools and to appoint members of an Independent Appeal tribunal.

5) The role of the Department of Education

The Department of Education offers comprehensive guidance to schools on the post-primary admissions process and sets exact dates for the process over the forthcoming year. The Department also issued a leaflet entitled *Advice for Parents of Primary Six Children*. The Department sets the admissions and enrolment numbers for each school in accordance with the Education Order, 1997 (Articles 11 and 12).

6) The role of parents in the transfer process

You have a very important role to play in the transfer process:

- You will help your child decide at which post-primary schools he/she will seek a place;
- You will then complete your child's application to these schools on a transfer form.

Parents have the right to express preferences for the schools they would like their child to attend, but *no child can be guaranteed a place in any school* or any particular type of school (secondary, integrated, grammar, single sex etc).

7) What to consider when choosing a post-primary school

You will help your child decide at which post-primary schools he/she will seek a place. In making these decisions it may be helpful for you and your child to think about:

- Your child's views on where he/she would be happiest;
- Your child's strengths and which school will provide the education best suited to your child;
- Your own and your child's impressions of schools;
- Travel to school and the arrangements for the provision of home to school transport.

Other useful information that may help inform your decision about specific schools may include:

- Schools' prospectuses;
- The range of public examinations taken at schools (eg GCSEs) and their pupils' success in these examinations;
- The arrangements schools make for pupils who may require special help;
- Schools' policies on homework, uniform, discipline, etc;

- The range of extra-curricular activities available in schools;
- School fees (if relevant).

This information will help you decide which schools you would like your child to attend for a variety of reasons, but you also need to consider the likelihood of your child being able to secure a place at your preferred schools. To do this you need to consider the level of competition for places at the school and the extent to which your child might be able to successfully compete for these places (i.e. the degree to which your child meets the school's admissions criteria). To assist you to make these judgements it may be helpful for you to have important information about:

- The pattern of applications and admissions to a school in previous years – that is, the number of applications received in each of the previous few years, and the number of applicants actually admitted in those years. Remember that the pattern of applications may change from year to year. A school that receives fewer applications than it has places available must admit all of those applicants.
- How schools will select children for admission if they have too many applicants. In this situation schools have to use admissions criteria to choose which children to admit. In deciding whether or not to apply to a school, it may be very helpful to have a good understanding of that school's admissions criteria.

8) Open days/evenings

You should also take the opportunity to visit each of the post-primary schools you are considering by attending their open days/evenings. Details of dates and times may be found on the EA website or directly from schools.

9) Completing your child's application to post-primary school

The application form for admission to Year 8 of a post-primary school is known as the *transfer form*.

For children attending a primary school in Northern Ireland:

- Transfer forms are sent by the EA to primary school principals for completion by parents;
- Parents should return completed transfer forms to the primary schools;
- Completed transfer forms should be returned to the EA by primary schools by Friday 10 February 2017.
- For children who do not attend a primary school in Northern Ireland:
- Parents should contact the EA to obtain a transfer form;

Completed transfer forms must be returned directly to the EA by the parent no later than 4pm on Wednesday 3 May 2017. Any transfer forms received after this date will not be processed until after the issue of the placement letter but please note that even if submitted by Wednesday 3 May 2017 at 4pm it may not be possible to process all preferences by Friday 19 May 2017.

Applications for children who are not EU citizens

- Parents who are applying for Visas or who would like their child to have a Visa to be educated in Northern Ireland can access information on the websites below:

- <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf>
- <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/pointsbasedsystem/registerofsponsorededucation>

The transfer form is a very important document. It will contain all the information which your chosen post-primary schools will use to consider your child's application. When the time comes to complete the form you will receive from your primary school a set of guidance notes to help you.

Expressing your preference for post-primary schools

The form asks you to list in order of preference the schools which you would like your child to attend:

- You should list at least four schools on the transfer form. In some areas it would be recommended to list more than four, for example, where schools tend to get more applications than they have places available. You can list as many schools as you wish but if you do not list at least four schools the possibility of your child not being admitted to a school of your preference is increased;
- You will NOT BE asked for further preferences during the process so it is very important that you list all schools on the transfer form which you would like your child to be considered for. As preferences are processed your child, having met the criteria of one of the schools listed as a high preference school on your application form, may be displaced by another child later in the process who better meets that school's criteria;
- You should not enter the same school more than once.

The importance of providing relevant information about your child

You will also be asked to provide information about your child when completing the transfer form. This is very important because:

- If one of your chosen schools has more applicants than places available it will have to choose which children to admit;
- A school will do this by applying its admissions criteria to its applicants;
- The information that you provide about your child when completing the transfer form will be what a school will use to see how your child meets its admissions criteria;

The sort of information that will be important for you to provide will vary from school to school. It will often be information like:

- Whether your child has any brothers or sisters already attending the school to which you are applying;
- Whether the child is the eldest child, only child or the eldest boy/girl in the family;
- Entrance test information should be recorded in the manner requested by the post-primary school where applicable;
- Whether your child is registered with the EA, as being entitled to free school meals.

The above items are only examples, it is therefore vital that you read very carefully the admissions criteria to ensure that you understand what information is needed by *all* the schools you list and provide this information when completing the transfer form.

Please remember to notify the EA in writing if you change your address during the transfer procedure.

Parents of twins who have a strong preference to send both children to the same post-primary school should look carefully at the admissions criteria used by the school(s) they wish to apply to. Most schools use admissions criteria which facilitate families wishing to have their children educated together. Some schools, however, use criteria which are more likely to lead to the scenario whereby one twin secures a place but the other does not. This is particularly the case for schools that use academic admissions criteria (ie schools which require applicants to sit an entrance test).

Special circumstances

Some schools which use academic performance as their first criterion *may* consider medical or other problems which may have affected performance in any test and which are supported by independent documentary evidence of a medical or other appropriate nature. These medical or other problems are commonly referred to as *special circumstances*.

A parent who wishes to claim special circumstances should read very carefully the requirements set out in the admissions criteria. This can differ from school to school so it is important to read the admissions criteria for all schools to which application is to be made.

For further advice on special circumstances the parent needs to contact those schools using unregulated entrance tests directly.

Special provisions

Special provisions refer primarily to:

- a) pupils whose parents wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland; or
- b) pupils who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland.

However, schools may use other definitions in their admissions criteria.

As in the case of special circumstances parents of pupils who may come under special provision need to contact those schools using unregulated entrance tests directly. The EA Psychology Service will not be involved in the assessment of these pupils.

Free school meal entitlement (FSME)

The Department has recommended that schools use their admissions criteria to make sure that they admit a fair number of children registered as entitled to Free School Meals.

- To make this possible, the transfer form will ask you if your child is currently listed on the EA register of children entitled to Free School Meals.
- If this applies to your child you should record this in the appropriate part of section C on the transfer form.
- Your claim of FSME registration will be checked if admission is secured on the basis of FSME.

If your child only becomes registered as entitled to free school meals after you have completed their transfer form you should contact the EA School Admissions Office in writing up to and including Wednesday 3 May 2017 at 4pm.

Checking and signing the transfer form

Before signing the transfer form, please note:

- That you should check all the information carefully before signing the form. You should ensure that all relevant information is provided when completing the transfer form to enable all the schools you have listed as preferences to consider your child's application. You and you alone are responsible for ensuring that all relevant information is provided.
- That if you do not provide relevant information you may reduce the chance of your child being admitted to a school of your preference.
- That it is also your responsibility to ensure that the information you provide is correct. Post-primary schools may verify information provided as part of your child's application and information found to be false or misleading can lead to non-admission.
- The information that you provide on the form is covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. Your signature on the form is deemed to be an authorisation by you to allow the EA to use the information on the form for the purpose of processing your application.

The completed and signed transfer form should be passed by your child's primary school to the EA by Friday 10 February 2017.

Change of preference after completion of the transfer form

It is important that you give very careful consideration to the stated order of preferences and indicate any changes to the EA on or before 4pm Wednesday 8 March 2017. Apart from those necessitated by exceptional circumstances, no changes of preferences will be processed between Thursday 9 March 2017 and Friday 19 May 2017 (inclusive). If you wish to change your preference because of exceptional circumstances (eg you have moved house which necessitates a change of preference), you must submit a request in writing for a change of preference for approval by the EA by 4pm on Wednesday 3 May 2017 along with verification of the exceptional circumstances. If approved, the EA will amend the original transfer form and send it to the new preference school. After this date changes of preference in exceptional circumstances will not be processed until after Friday 19 May 2017.

You should be aware that after Friday 19 May 2017 a number of schools will have allocated all their places and can only give consideration to a change of preference in the event that a place becomes available.

New or additional information after completion of the transfer form

If your circumstances do change in a way that may be important for the transfer process, you should contact the EA Transfer Officer in writing to provide this new information. Contact details are included in this document. Wednesday 3 May 2017 at 4pm is the final date by which the EA will process any additional information or new applications. After this date additional information and new applications will not be processed until after Friday 19 May 2017.

10) Admissions to schools

The Department of Education is responsible for determining the number of pupils each school can admit, this is known as the school's admissions number. If a school's admissions number is greater than the number of applications which it receives; all such applicants will be offered places.

In the event of the number of applications being greater than a school's admissions number the board of governors will apply the school's published admissions criteria to all such applicants to determine which children will be offered places up to the school's admission number. Responsibility for drawing up and applying a school's admissions criteria rests with the board of governors.

If your child is not accepted by your first preference school the transfer form and any documents attached will be sent to your second preference school. The process, already described, will be repeated until all preferences have been considered. Places will be allocated to those who best meet the schools' admission criteria.

11) Notification of placement

A letter will be posted to you on Friday 19 May 2017 to tell you the post-primary school in which your child has been placed. Schools are not permitted to tell you the outcome on or before this date.

What happens if my letter does not arrive? If you have not received your letter by 3.30pm on Saturday 20 May 2017 you may contact the EA between 3.30pm and 5pm. Contact details for the EA offices are provided in this document.

You should **only** contact the EA on Saturday in the event that you have not received a placement letter. EA staff will be available to answer other transfer related queries on Monday 22 May 2017.

What happens if my child does not get a place? If you receive a letter informing you that your child has not been placed you will be asked to nominate further schools. A list of schools which still have places available will be on the EA website: www.eani.org.uk/admissions

12) Waiting lists

Please refer to each individual schools policy if you wish your child's name to be placed on a waiting list should a vacancy arise in an over-subscribed school after Friday 19 May 2017.

13) Appeals against school placement

Can I appeal if my child does not get a place in a school of my choice? If your child has not been accepted by a school of your preference you may appeal the decision of the board of governors.

Independent tribunals will be established by the EA to consider appeals. These tribunals will decide on whether or not a school has correctly applied its admissions criteria in deciding to refuse the child admission to the school. The actual substance of the criteria cannot be challenged in the appeal tribunal.

You will be advised of your right to appeal against boards of governors' decisions at the time of notification of school placement.

If you wish to appeal the decision of a board of governors in not accepting your child, you should notify The Clerk to the Tribunal (post-primary) in writing, c/o the Education Authority, by 4pm Monday 5 June 2017. If your letter indicating your intention to appeal is not received by this date and time it will not be processed. Recorded delivery or email is recommended. The contact details for the EA offices are provided at the end of this document.

An appeal form and details of the appeals procedure will be issued to you on receipt of your written intention to appeal.

An appeal tribunal considers the evidence that was available to the board of governors of a school at the time it was making its decision on admissions to the school. It should be noted that any additional information, which was not available to the board of governors at the time of the allocation of places, cannot be taken into account by an independent appeal tribunal.

An appeal can only be upheld if a tribunal finds that the admissions criteria were not applied or not correctly applied and that if the admissions criteria had been correctly applied by the school, the child would have been admitted to the school within the admissions number for the school.

If an appeal tribunal should find that a board of governors did not apply its admissions criteria correctly, and that the child would have been admitted if it had, the tribunal will award that child a place at the school concerned.

14) Exceptional circumstances

The placement letter issued to you on Friday 19 May 2017 will tell you in which post-primary school your child has been placed. If your child has not been placed in the school to which you feel they must, for compelling and exceptional reasons, be admitted, you can apply to have your child's case considered by the Exceptional Circumstances Body.

Please note that, by law, the Exceptional Circumstances Body may not regard the following as exceptional circumstances requiring the admission of a child to a particular school:

- circumstances related wholly or mainly to the kind of education provided at that school;
- circumstances related to a child's academic ability; or
- circumstances related wholly or mainly to the availability of transport to that school.

A claim of exceptional circumstances can only be considered after you have applied to the post-primary school through the normal admissions process and been refused a place. Claims for exceptional circumstances can be considered at the same time, though separately, from admissions appeals.

Advice about how to obtain detailed information about the exceptional circumstances process, including how to apply to have your case considered, will be included in the placement letter.

Further information is available at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/appealing-school-place-decision>

Other information relating to transfer

15) Non fee-paying

Pupils admitted to the secondary departments of grammar schools who reside in Northern Ireland with their parents, or whose parents, though not resident in Northern Ireland, are nationals of an EU member state, will not have to pay tuition fees. The admission of other pupils liable to pay fees will be a matter for individual schools to decide acting within their admissions criteria and their admissions and enrolment numbers. The admission of pupils resident in the Republic of Ireland will also be a matter for individual schools to decide upon but any such pupils admitted to a grammar school will continue to be liable to pay tuition fees. Such pupils can only be considered for admission if there are places available after all Northern Ireland pupils seeking places have been placed. However, voluntary schools are entitled to charge a capital fee.

16) Admission to years 9 to 14

If you wish to transfer your child from one post-primary school to another, you should apply to that school by completing an official application form AP1 (available from schools or from the EA website). The school will then make a decision as to whether or not it can admit the child using its admission criteria if necessary. Schools may not admit a child if this means exceeding the enrolment number of the school. A school is also entitled to refuse admission if the admission of a child would be prejudicial to the efficient use of resources but must act reasonably in applying this consideration.

17) Admission to senior high schools

In the two-tier system (sometimes known as the Dickson Plan) the majority of pupils in the controlled sector in the former Craigavon Borough Council area and parts of former Armagh City District Council area transfer at age 11 years to junior high schools. These schools provide a wide range of courses appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of all pupils. At the end of key stage 3 (age 14 years) after 3 years of attendance at junior high school (secondary) pupils transfer to other schools to complete their compulsory education in key stage 4.

Pupils are selected for admission to senior high schools in accordance with the admissions criteria established by each individual board of governors.

Further details on the two tier system will be available in an information booklet for parents which is due to be published in February 2017.

18) Transport assistance to post-primary schools:

Eligibility

Transport assistance is provided in accordance with Department of Education circular 1996/41 – School Transport (updated 2009). The Authority has a statutory responsibility for the provision of transport assistance to facilitate the attendance of non-fee paying pupils, resident in Northern Ireland, at a grant aided school. The circular states:-

“Where there is/are suitable school/schools within statutory qualifying distance (3 miles) from a pupil's home and a pupil attends a more distant school, transport assistance will be provided only where the pupil has been unable to gain a place in any suitable school/schools within statutory qualifying distance”.

Suitable School - a suitable school is defined as:

*Secondary : Controlled, Maintained, Integrated or Irish Medium
Grammar : Denominational & Non-denominational*

Applicants are required to demonstrate that they were unsuccessful in gaining admission in all nearest school(s) in the same category within statutory qualifying distance in order to qualify for assistance – application is made by listing a pupil's order of preference on the transfer application form. The transfer form is the only document taken into consideration for pupils transferring from primary to post-primary.

Where there is no suitable school within statutory qualifying distance from a pupil's home, transport assistance will be granted provided there is EA or public transport already available to or in the vicinity of the school attended.

Parents should also note that the transport policy makes no exceptions for those parents who disregard the requirements to apply to all suitable school(s) within the qualifying distance of a pupil's home on the basis of possible rejection by those school(s).

Applicants are required to demonstrate that they were unsuccessful in gaining admission in all nearest school(s) in the same category within statutory qualifying distance in order to qualify for assistance – application is made by listing a pupil’s order of preference on the transfer application form.

Where a pupil applies for transport assistance to a more distant school in order to complete a course of study leading to GCE ‘AS’ and ‘A’ level qualifications assistance will be granted only when evidence is provided that no suitable school within the transport qualifying distance (3 miles) of the pupil’s permanent home can offer any GCE ‘AS’ and ‘A’ level provision. *Transport assistance to a more distant school is not provided on the basis of subject choice.*

The categories of school do not extend to take account of other factors such as range or nature of curriculum provided, proficiency at particular sports, relationship with parish boundaries, patterns of enrolment, or single sex/co-educational schools. Preference expressed on these or similar grounds will not qualify for transport assistance if an otherwise suitable school exists within the qualifying distance and the chosen school lies outside the limit.

Applying for transport assistance

All applications for transport must be made ON-LINE for the 2017/2018 Academic Year. Further information on how to apply on-line will be made available nearer the time through schools and the Authority’s website.

Means of assistance

Transport assistance for eligible pupils can be provided by a variety of means including the issue of sessional tickets (commonly referred to as ‘bus passes’) for public transport, the operation of Authority vehicles, the hire of buses/taxis or a financial payment.

Where there is no ‘suitable school’ within statutory qualifying distance (3 miles) of the child’s permanent home address, transport will be provided to the school in which the child is enrolled, provided that a suitable Authority or public transport service to, or in the vicinity of the school is already available.

The Authority is not obliged to provide transport where either the service is deemed unsuitable or the cost of doing so could be regarded as an unreasonable public expenditure. Parents must satisfy themselves when seeking admission to schools for their children that a suitable transport service is available. *Gaining a place in a school does not automatically commit the Authority to providing transport assistance.*

The Authority is not required to provide ‘door to door’ transport. Parents are responsible for ensuring the safety of their children on the journey to and from a designated bus stop if necessary.

Bi-lateral schools

These are post-primary schools which have a grammar stream approved by the Department of Education within the school. The following rules are applicable for each school:

1. Lagan College

- Pupils admitted to the grammar stream on the basis of ability, will be eligible for transport assistance provided that they live outside statutory qualifying distance, irrespective of whether there may be another category of grammar school within qualifying distance.
- Pupils gaining entry on an all-ability basis will, for transport purposes, be treated in the same way as those attending other integrated post-primary schools, ie they will

get assistance if they live outside qualifying distance and, have sought and failed to gain a place in any other integrated post-primary school within statutory qualifying distance.

- Pupils who live within statutory qualifying distance from Lagan, and who wish to attend a denominational or non-denominational grammar school outside statutory qualifying distance, will be able to seek places in such schools, and receive transport assistance, without specifying the Lagan Grammar stream as their first preference.

2. Slemish College Ballymena, St Killians College Carnlough, St Patricks College Maghera

- Pupils admitted to the grammar stream on the basis of ability, will only be eligible for transport assistance provided that they live outside statutory qualifying distance and have been unable to gain admission to any other category of grammar school within qualifying distance.
- Parents whose children obtain admission to the grammar stream MUST provide written evidence from the school that their child has been accepted into the grammar stream. This essential information MUST be submitted with a pupil's transport application form; otherwise it will be treated as an application for transport assistance to the non-grammar stream.

Entrance test school

Regardless of the fact that some schools have chosen to set entrance exams as part of their admissions criteria; the procedure for determining eligibility for transport assistance remains unchanged. Pupils must seek to gain admission to their nearest suitable school (within 3 miles) at the transfer application stage, prior to making application to more distant schools.

An unsuccessful application to an 'entrance test' school will be considered sufficient even when the applicant did not take the particular test.

Category B voluntary grammar schools

Notwithstanding the above provisions, there is no obligation to seek a place in any category B voluntary grammar school within 3 miles of a pupil's home. The category B schools are Campbell College and Royal Belfast Academical Institution. *Pupils who live over 3 miles from these schools and wish to attend either, must however demonstrate that they were unable to gain a place in all non-denominational grammar schools within 3 miles of their home if they are to qualify for transport assistance.*

Special educational needs

Special transport arrangements may be provided for children under a statement of special educational needs who are enrolled at approved special schools or learning support centres attached to primary schools. For more information please see the website www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-school-transport/

Transport on medical grounds

Pupils who have medical problems will only receive transport assistance if they have fulfilled the provisions of the current transport policy as outlined above.

Further information on how to apply for transport under medical grounds is available on the website at: www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-school-transport/

Non-eligible pupils

A pupil who resides under the qualifying distance is not normally eligible for transport assistance. It is a parents' responsibility to put in place whatever arrangements they consider appropriate to facilitate their child's education at school. Parents of pupils who would not be eligible for transport assistance may wish to make contact with their local bus company regarding the purchase of a travel ticket.

It should be drawn to the attention of parents that the transport eligibility criteria and transport arrangements may alter during their child's time at any particular school and this should be taken into consideration when making their school selection.

Further information on the transport application process can be found on the EA website.

19) Free school meals, school uniform/physical education clothing allowance

Information in relation to applying for free schools meals and school uniform/physical education clothing allowance can be accessed on the Education Authority website at <http://www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-free-school-meals-school-uniform-physical-education-clothing-allowance/>

20) Education authority contact details

<p>Belfast Office 40 Academy Street Belfast BT1 2NQ Tel: 028 9056 4080 Email: admissions-br@eani.org.uk</p>	<p>Ballymena Office County Hall 182 Galgorm Road Ballymena BT42 1HN Tel: 028 2566 1253 Email: admissions-ner@eani.org.uk</p>
<p>Dundonald Office Grahamsbridge Road Dundonald BT16 2HS Tel: 028 9056 6981 E-mail: admissions-ser@eani.org.uk</p>	<p>Armagh Office 3 Charlemont Place The Mall Armagh BT61 9AX Tel: 028 3741 0084 / 0082 E-mail: admissions-sr@eani.org.uk</p>
<p>Omagh Office 1 Hospital Road Omagh BT79 0AW Tel: 028 8241 1460 E-mail: admissions-wr@eani.org.uk</p>	

Helplines

If your notification of placement letter does not arrive on Saturday 20 May 2017 you can contact the EA between 3.30pm and 5pm. Please contact the EA office in which area your child's primary school is situated.

Belfast Office:	028 9056 4080
Ballymena Office:	028 2566 1404
Dundonald Office:	077 7176 6013
Armagh Office:	028 3751 2520 / 028 3741 0084
Omagh Office:	028 8241 1460 / 028 8241 1547

NOTE

The advice which has been given is based on the Education (NI) Order 1997 and the related regulations. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, it is given as guidance and not as an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The information contained in this document relates to the 2017/18 school year and is correct at November 2016. Any changes made to the arrangements will be published on the EA website.