



Education Authority

# **Procedure for Admission to Senior High Schools 2017**

## **A Guide for Parents**

Updated: January 2017

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### Sources of Information

Information on Senior High Schools and other post-primary schools can be accessed on the Education Authority (EA) website at [www.eani.org.uk/admissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/admissions). Here you will find a Schools Directory which you can search to identify all the schools in your area. You can view, download or print the admissions criteria of the post-primary schools in which you are interested. You will also find information on the Procedure for Admission to Senior High Schools.

A reference booklet containing admissions criteria for Senior High Schools is available in Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools. A reference booklet containing admissions criteria for other Post-Primary Schools in the Southern Region of the EA is available in all post-primary schools and primary schools. Additional information can be obtained directly from Senior High Schools eg on the Open Days/Evenings.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

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<b>Admission Criteria</b>	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 oversubscribed.
<b>Admissions Number</b>	The maximum number of pupils, which a school is allowed to admit into Year 8 (or Year 11 in the case of a Senior High School) as determined by the Department of Education.
<b>Appeal Tribunal</b>	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.
<b>Capital Fee</b>	A fee, approved by the Department of Education, which voluntary grammar schools require each parent to pay the school towards the capital cost of running it. The fee varies from school to school. Other secondary schools do not make this charge.
<b>Controlled Schools</b>	Schools managed and funded by the EA, through Boards of Governors. The Board of Governors consist of representatives of transferors – mainly the Protestant churches – along with representatives of parents, teachers and EA.
<b>DE</b>	Department of Education.
<b>EA</b>	Education Authority
<b>Enrolment Number</b>	The maximum number of pupils which a school may have on its register at any time, as determined by the Department of Education.
<b>FSME</b>	Free School Meals Entitlement.
<b>Integrated Schools</b>	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.
<b>Irish-Medium School</b>	A school or unit within a school where teaching and learning takes place through the Irish Language.
<b>Voluntary Grammar</b>	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.
<b>Maintained Schools</b>	Schools managed by a Board of Governors nominated by trustees - mainly catholic - along with parents, teachers, DE and EA representatives.

## POST PRIMARY ADMISSION IN THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY, SOUTHERN REGION THE PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the main steps in the procedure for Admission to Senior High Schools in September 2017 and how parents complete their child's application (**Form P1/17**) to Senior High Schools or Other Post-Primary Schools.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs have a separate transfer process. The Senior High School placement is discussed with the parent as part of the review of the child's statement.

**Parents requiring further information on the transfer process for children with a statement should contact the Special Education Section, Education Authority, Armagh Office, 3 Charlemont Place, The Mall, Armagh, BT61 9AX or telephone 028 3751 2522 or 028 3741 0139.**

### 2. OUTLINE OF THE TWO-TIER SYSTEM

In the Two-Tier System (sometimes known as the Dickson plan) the majority of pupils in the Controlled Sector of the former Craigavon Borough Council area and parts of the former Armagh City and District Council area transfer at age 11 years to Controlled 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 attendance at a Controlled 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 school's Board of Governors.

### 3. SCHOOLS IN THE TWO-TIER SYSTEM

Controlled Junior High Schools	Age Group	Controlled Senior High Schools	Age Group
Clounagh Junior High School	(11 – 14)	Craigavon Senior High School	(14 – 16)
Killicomaine Junior High School	(11 – 14)	Lurgan College	(14 – 18)
Lurgan Junior High School	(11 – 14)	Portadown College	(14 – 18)
Tandragee Junior High School	(11 – 14)		

### 4. SCHOOLS OUTSIDE THE TWO-TIER SYSTEM

**The majority of pupils transfer from a Controlled Junior High School to a Senior High School.** However, parents may apply to a post-primary school other than a Senior High School for a place in Key Stage 4 for their child.

Some schools in the former Craigavon Borough Council area are not part of the Two-Tier System and retain their pupils beyond the age of 14. Pupils may leave at the age of 16 (end of Year 12) or stay at school until the age of 18 (end of Year 14). The schools are:

Brownlow Integrated College, Craigavon	Controlled Integrated
Lismore Comprehensive, Craigavon	Catholic Maintained
St Ronan's College, Lurgan	Voluntary Grammar

Information on Post-Primary Schools is available on the Education Authority (EA) website at [www.eani.org.uk/admissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/admissions)

### 5. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO YEAR 11 IN SEPTEMBER 2017

#### 5.1 Applications on behalf of pupils attending Controlled Junior High Schools

An application form will be issued to parents of pupils transferring at the end of Year 10 from Controlled Junior High Schools. As a parent you will be asked to list in order of preference the schools which you would like your child to attend. The completed form should be returned to the Junior High School not later than **Monday 13 February 2017**.

#### 5.2 Applications on behalf of pupils attending schools other than Controlled Junior High Schools

Pupils who are not enrolled at Controlled Junior High Schools are entitled to seek admission to Senior High Schools. Parents should contact the Principal of the Senior High School which is being considered for admission. An application form (Form AP1 14+), which is available on request from the Pupil and Parent Unit, should be completed and returned directly to the Pupil and Parent Unit by **Monday 20 February 2017**. The Pupil and Parent Unit will

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forward all applications to the school and the school's admissions criteria will be applied to establish whether or not the pupil is to be admitted.

### 5.3 Applications on behalf of pupils in Controlled Junior High Schools seeking places Outside the Two-Tier System

Preferences for schools outside the Two-Tier System should also be listed on Form P1/17. Please note that these applications will be considered in accordance with the key dates for the procedure for Transfer from Controlled Junior High Schools as set out below.

### 5.4 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/registerofspnsorseducation>

## 6. MAIN STEPS AND KEY DATES IN THE PROCEDURE

Monday 13 February 2017	Last date for return of Application Forms (P1/17) by parents to Junior High Schools.
Monday 20 February 2017	Last date for return of Application Forms (AP1 14+) by parents of pupils not attending Junior High Schools to the Pupil and Parent Unit.
Monday 20 February 2017	Last date for Junior High Schools to return Application Forms (P1/17) to Pupil and Parent Unit.
Friday 3 March 2017	Date by which Pupil and Parent Unit issues application forms to receiver schools.
Thursday 13 April 2017 – Tuesday 18 April 2017 – Agreed fixed closure for Easter	
Monday 8 May 2017	Last date on which preferences may be changed or additional information provided.
Friday 12 May 2017	Issue of letters to parents notifying them of the decision about applications.
Friday 26 May 2017 by 4.00 pm	Final date for lodging notice of intention to appeal.

## 7. THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Each school has a maximum number of available places; therefore, no child can be guaranteed a place in any particular school.

If a school has more applicants than available places then the Board of Governors of the school will use the school's admission criteria to identify which pupils are to be admitted. The information about your child that you provide when completing the application form will be what the school will use to see how your child meets the admissions criteria.

Parents have a very important role to play in the 14+ transfer process in helping your child decide at which schools he/she will seek a place and complete your child's application to these schools on **Form P1/17**.

You should:

- Carefully read the admissions criteria for each school you are considering.
- Think about how these criteria might apply to your child.
- Think about what information you should provide when completing your child's application form.

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### 8. THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

The Education Authority (EA) does not place children in Senior High Schools or other Post-Primary Schools (except children for whom it is maintaining Statements of Special Educational Needs) but administers and co-ordinates the procedure and will facilitate the expression of parental preferences. 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.

### 9. THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Department of Education offers comprehensive guidance to schools on the admissions process. The Department sets the admissions and enrolment numbers for each school in accordance with the Education Order, 1997 (Articles 11 and 12).

### 10. ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOLS INCLUDING THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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. The criteria must include the order of priority for the admission of pupils; and admissions criteria shall provide that all children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission must be selected for admission before any child not so resident may be selected.

If your child is not accepted by your first preference school Form P1/17 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. PLACEMENT LETTERS

A letter will be posted by a school to you on **Friday 12 May 2017** to advise you of the school in which your child has been placed. Schools are not permitted to tell you the outcome before this date.

If your child does not get a place you will receive a letter from the EA to advise you of this and you will be asked to nominate further schools.

### 12. WAITING LISTS

Please refer to each individual school's 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 12 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 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 in writing, c/o the Education Authority, Armagh Office, by **4.00 pm Friday 26 May 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 are provided on page 8.

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.

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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 12 May 2017 will tell you in which Senior High School or other 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 senior high school or 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 <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/parents/schools-learning-and-development/choosing-a-school/appealing-a-school-place-decision.htm>

## OTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO ADMISSION TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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### 15. NON FEE-PAYING PLACES

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 12 TO 14

Where parents wish to transfer their child from one post-primary school to another they should complete an official application form (Form AP1) which is available on the EA website [www.eani.org.uk/admissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/admissions). The school will then make a decision as to whether or not it can admit the child using its admissions 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. In these circumstances you should be advised of your right of complaint.

The Admissions Criteria for Years 12 to 14 relating to individual schools in the Southern Region of the EA are available on the EA website [www.eani.org.uk/admissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/admissions)

### 17. 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** (P1/17 or AP1 14+) is the only document taken into consideration for pupils transferring within the Dickson Plan system.

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 walking 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.**

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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.

### 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/](http://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 [www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-school-transport/](http://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**

## **18. 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 EA website at: <http://www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-free-school-meals-school-uniform-physical-education-clothing-allowance/>

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### 19. EDUCATION AUTHORITY CONTACT DETAILS

Contact details for the Armagh Office of EA which includes the Craigavon, Portadown and Lurgan areas.

<p><b>EDUCATION AUTHORITY</b> Armagh Office 3 Charlemont Place The Mall Armagh BT61 9AX Tel: 028 3751 2520 E-mail: <a href="mailto:admissions-sr@eani.org.uk">admissions-sr@eani.org.uk</a></p>
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Contact details for the other EA offices are provided below:

<p>Ballymena Office County Hall 182 Galgorm Road Ballymena BT42 1HN Tel: 028 2566 1253 Email: <a href="mailto:admissions-ner@eani.org.uk">admissions-ner@eani.org.uk</a></p>	<p>Belfast Office 40 Academy Street Belfast BT1 2NQ Tel: 028 9056 4080 Email: <a href="mailto:admissions-br@eani.org.uk">admissions-br@eani.org.uk</a></p>
<p>Dundonald Office Grahamsbridge Road Dundonald BT16 2HS Tel: 028 9056 6981 E-mail: <a href="mailto:admissions-ser@eani.org.uk">admissions-ser@eani.org.uk</a></p>	<p>Omagh Office 1 Hospital Road Omagh BT79 0AW Tel: 028 8241 1460 E-mail: <a href="mailto:admissions-wr@eani.org.uk">admissions-wr@eani.org.uk</a></p>

#### 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 2017/2018 school year and is correct at December 2016. Any changes made to the arrangements will be published on the EA website.