

6 December 2018

To Principals of Nursery Schools, Primary Schools with Nursery Units and Managers/Leaders of Pre-school Providers participating in the Pre-School Education Programme.

Dear Principal/Manager/Leader

**DIGITAL ADMISSIONS – SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE TO UPDATE NO. 2
BENEFIT VERIFICATION SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN (APPLICABLE ONLY TO PRE-SCHOOL)**

Further to Digital Admissions Update No 2 issued on 14 November I write to confirm the arrangements for verification of benefits.

As advised in the email dated 1 November 2018 from Mrs Mairead Kerr, School Admissions Officer – Pre-School the Department of Education has amended the definition of Socially Disadvantaged to read as follows:

‘Children from ‘socially disadvantaged circumstances’ means a child whose parent is in receipt of (i) Income Support, or (ii) Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, or (iii) an award of Income Support which has been converted into an Employment and Support Allowance and the level of benefit remains the same, or (iv) Universal Credit. When parents apply for places for their child on this basis they must have their Benefit Verification stamped by the Social Security /Jobs and Benefits Office to confirm that they are in receipt of a qualifying payment. This should then be sent by the parent directly to the provider of first preference’.

Online applications in respect of Socially Disadvantaged children:

From 2 January 2019 parents who choose to apply online will be directed to www.eani.org.uk/benefitverification where they will be able to download the Benefit Verification Form. This form should be brought to their local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits Office for stamping. Blank copies of the Benefit Verification Form will also be made available in the local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits Office from 2 January 2019. This form is available to schools and preschools from the same date.

In the case of online applications the onus is on the parent to ensure that the Benefit Verification Form is submitted to the first preference setting not later than 12 noon on Friday 8 February 2019. In the case of an online application, where a parent has indicated that their child is socially disadvantaged, non-return of a Benefit Verification Form by this date would not deem the application as late, but the child cannot be categorised as meeting the statutory criterion until verification is received.

Education Authority

Digital Transformation Office, 3 Charlemont Place, The Mall, Armagh BT61 9AX

W: www.eani.org.uk

T: +44 (0)28 3751 2222

Email: digital@eani.org.uk

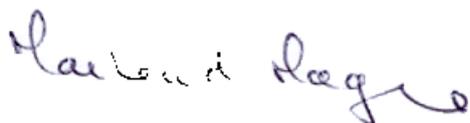
Paper applications in respect of Socially Disadvantaged children:

As has been the case in previous years, the paper version of the pre-school application form will include a benefit verification section which parents must get stamped by the local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits Office. The onus is on parents to submit the stamped paper application form (which includes the Benefit Verification section) to their first preference setting by the closing date of 31 January 2019 (midnight), if the application is to be treated as punctual. As advised in Update No 2 the pdf version of the application form will be provided to coincide with the Parent Portal opening on 2 January 2019.

Last Date for receipt of Additional Information

I would draw your attention to the final date within Stage 1 for the receipt of additional information which can include benefit verification which is Monday 25th March 2019 (not later than 4pm).

Yours sincerely



Mairead Maguire
Project Lead Digital Admissions
Education Authority
Tel. (028) 3751 2411