

## Transcript – Part 1 – Parent Journey

Hello and welcome to Pre-School and Primary digital admissions training for September 2021 intake.

This is 2 part training; this is part one and it's the parent journey. So for school leaders and Principals it's to let you know what the parent will see as they go through this journey and the new parts of what we're offering this year.

So in this part of the training we'll cover communications, the citizen portal which you will be well aware of from previous years if you've used it, and the new section on this training which refers to the Document Hub which is upload of evidence, and that's new for September 2021 intake.

Part 2 of the training will take you through the school journey and that includes the school portal, which you should be aware of and the download of the information that will be uploaded as part of the document hub training that I'll be talking to you about today.

Some key dates for digital admissions this year - the portal will be open for applicants for Pre-School and Primary between the 7th and the 29th of January 12 noon both days.

And the document upload facility will be open a little longer for anyone who makes a fairly late application towards the end of the open portal, and this will be open for another week up until the 5th of February, to allow anybody who is having some difficulty, or was looking for some information to support their application to get that uploaded by that time.

Updates will be published as in previous years on the Online Resource Centre, which we're calling the 'Digital Admissions Online Resource Hub', and that can be found on the EA website.

The majority of our publicity materials will start to be made available from the middle of December.

A video which is similar to last year will be refreshed to address the key messages and we'll continue to use social media to get key dates and messages out to our parents.

Obviously this process is digital first. We've relied heavily on the support of schools in the past to help parents and to signpost parents towards the digital admissions process. It's been very successful and this year is no different and perhaps even more emphasis on it given the current situation - that we don't want face-to-face meetings with parents. So therefore we're hoping that the digital admissions process will be a great support for our schools in that way.

There will be a paper application available. That will be available to parents and it will be from the EA a result of a direct request to them by a parent, so schools won't have to deal with any paper applications or hand those out in any way. As before, any late applications that miss the open portal, must be made on paper.

In terms of digital assistance to support our parents as they go through this process, there will be virtual clinics available, again due to the current situation, we'll be supported by our partners in 'Go ON NI' which is a volunteering service.

And we have EA helpline telephone support as before. The website and the digital hub and the Intercultural Education Service will be supporting us with translation services.

So the main change for this year if you're a parent going through this journey, is that you will be able to upload documents now rather than bring those in person to the school. So this allows parents to upload any documents in support of their application.

They can upload photos, scans, PDF documents and so forth from whatever device they're using.

The majority of our schools will want a birth certificate, but they could also do proof of address or proof of eldest or only child.

We will be consistently putting the message out there to our parents, that they should only upload documents that are required by the schools on their preference list for admission to that school.

This will be what parents have been used to in previous years. The parents making an application for a place will use the citizen portal and they will log on here as they have in previous years and again they must do this between the 7th and the 29th.

They will be guided through the steps where they add a child using the 'my family' button and then they make an application for that child or the children they have in the 'my family' who are available who are at the correct age to make the applications either to Pre-School or Primary.

There are on screen prompts to support our parents, and the system is set up to support our Nursery schools and units, that have both full time and part time places. Also our Irish medium units where there may be English and Irish medium education provided.

And the same goes for our integrated schools where they need to capture community background and these are all changes that have been made over the years to the current system and will be made available again this year.

There is targeted use of emails to our parents. For example if they are socially disadvantaged, they tick that box and an email will direct them as to how they can give us verification of that benefit that will be included in the information that goes out to parents automatically. And they'll get reminder emails if they haven't submitted or completed an application and all of these prompts are to support us in making sure that a parent isn't left with an application that isn't submitted and that they miss the final date, so a lot of these automatic emails will go out to support our parents to ensure that they don't do that.

And now the section on the new upload for parents and what that will look like, and we've chosen to show screenshots of the phone for doing this process because so many of our parents in the past have used mobile devices as they use our digital admissions system and so this gives you an idea of what they will see whenever they go in.

So once they have made their application on this citizen portal they'll receive an email confirming that they've done that and inviting them to upload documents. They'll be informed that they'll get another email that will help them with the link to get to the upload facility, and once they click that link they'll be taken here.

Their application number will be pre-populated because it will come from the previous system where they made the application and although this is still in testing, obviously we will be expecting perhaps something like the child's date of birth to be the identifier that we use to let them on to the system before they click continue and move on.

They'll then be given a page that supports them in terms of the admissions criteria and we know that parents sometimes have difficulty in accessing this, and getting the crucial information they need

from the admissions criteria, and often this is the sort of question that they ask our colleagues, Principals and leaders.

And I suppose one of the beauties of this system is that we can give them a link that they can go off to those pages, and perhaps make a list of any documents that they might need for each of the schools that they've put on their preference list, and then have that to hand as they go through this process, ready to upload documents.

So we will give them a bit of prior warning as to what good preparation for uploading these documents might be. For example if they have hard copies, they could take a photograph and have that in their phone or scan it. They might have to edit some of their documents, perhaps if it has sensitive information on for example a Bank statement, they could use a black pen and make that unreadable, or use editing software in a different way if they're able to do that.

And it's important that they are aware that the documents will only be visible to the schools that they have listed as a preference.

So the system then asks them to select the type of document, and then there's a selection for the document and where it is stored - on their phone in this example.

So we've used the example of birth certificate because all providers need that.

And if they click on birth certificate, they will then be given an option as to where to find that birth certificate. In this example, it's on their phone. All phones have a different way of directing you as to where you can go and locate that document. In this example, there's a camera option and a file option. And we could either get it if they've previously stored it, or they could take a new photograph or go to a photograph they've already taken.

So they select the file that they want and it's added to the uploaded documents list.

At this stage they can review this and submit it if they want to continue, or they can repeat these steps to add another document.

Only upload documents that are needed for the admissions criteria is the current message that we want to make sure that we get through to our parents, because there's many of our schools who don't require anything other than a birth certificate so we'll be directing them to those admissions criteria to ensure that they only upload what's necessary for the schools in their list.

Then there'll be the opportunity to review the list of documents that they're going to upload, and if they decide that they would like to delete one of those, a warning message will come up to say, 'Are you sure you want to delete this?'

Then back at the list, they can continue if they are satisfied that the correct documents have been added.

Finally, there's a message to confirm that there is a successful upload and a reminder that later on in the process, they'll be able to log back into the citizen portal in April time to view placement details for their child and for their application.

As usual, there are further sources of help on this process. The Digital Admissions helpdesk number and the email addresses that you'll be aware of from previous years.

Finally, if you'd like to go on to see the second part, Part 2 of this training, you will find this on the Digital Admissions hub on the EA website.

Thank you.