



EARLY ENROLMENT POLICY

Rationale:

- The education of children is vital in their overall success as members of society. The age at which a child commences formal education is important in maximizing their opportunities for success.

Aims:

- To ensure that all students attend school at the proper age, or at an earlier age if it is deemed appropriate and proper approval has been granted.

Implementation:

It is the policy of the Department of Education that children entering school must be 5 years old by 30 April of the year they enter school.

Under exceptional circumstances parents/guardians may request that their child be considered for early entry to school. The criterion for early entry to school is that failure to admit to school will result in long term educational disadvantage to the student. School readiness is not a criterion for early school entry. Where parents/guardians of students turning 5 years of age after 30 April and before 30 June of the year they wish to enter school, wish to request early admission to school, they should contact the Principal of their local school in the first instance. The following procedures apply:

1. Principals should inform parents/guardians of the general policy of the Department of Education and advise parents/guardians of the possible disadvantages of children commencing school at a very young age.
2. A principal cannot enrol an under-age student without a copy of the letter of approval for under age entry from the Regional Director to the parents/guardians.
3. If a parent/guardian, after being so advised, continues to seek under-age admission, then the principal should inform the parent/guardian to make written application to the Regional Director. This should include documentary evidence of the date of birth and a statement of reasons for which early entry is being sought.
4. Requests for early entry will not be processed if received later than two weeks into the school year for which admission is being sought.
5. When the written application is lodged, a referral will be made to a psychologist from the Regional Assessment Service to undertake an assessment of the child, which may include cognitive, educational and other assessments; observation of the child at home and at pre-school; consultation with pre-school staff and other relevant professionals; and consultation with the parents/guardians. The psychologist will provide a report to the Regional Director which will include any exceptional circumstances for the child.
6. The Regional Director will consider the information provided and make a decision to grant or refuse early school entry at the school for which enrolment was sought.
7. A letter signed by the Regional Director will be forwarded to the parents/guardians informing them of the decision. A copy will be forwarded to the principal of the school for which enrolment was being sought.

Evaluation:

This policy will only be reviewed if Departmental enrolment procedures change.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on....

12th December 2017