

# ADMISSIONS PROTOCOLS

## Introduction

Admissions protocols will be applied in two cases that involve applications for admission to Enable Ireland schools and clinical services.

In the first case, an application may be made by parents/guardians for enrolment in the school of a child (a person under the age of 18 years) who is already receiving Enable Ireland Services.

In the second case, an application may be made by parents/guardians for clinical services and enrolment in the school of a child who is not already receiving Enable Ireland Services.

In both cases, formal protocols governing admission to clinical services and school enrolment will be implemented. However, the implementation of these protocols will not preclude clinic or school authorities from engaging informally with parents/guardians during their initial contacts with school or clinic.

Consent of parents/guardians will be required for clinical services and school to access and share assessment reports.

*CASE 1: Where parents/guardians of a child already receiving children's services express an interest in enrolling him/her in Marino School, Sandymount School or the School of the Divine Child.*

Where parents/guardians of a child already receiving children's services make a direct approach to Marino School, Sandymount School or the School of the Divine Child, expressing interest in enrolment, the principal will inform the DOS.

Where parents/guardians express an interest to clinic staff in enrolling their child in Marino School, Sandymount School or the School of the Divine Child, the clinic staff will, with the agreement of parents/guardians, inform the local Director of Services (DOS) or delegate.

The DOS/delegate will thereafter inform the principal and supply parents/guardians with written information about the school. This information will be in the form of a school brochure given to clinical services which *inter alia* describes the management structure, education programmes, facilities and resources of the school and the school's enrolment policy, in addition to providing information on links with mainstream schools and Outreach Programmes, where relevant.

The principal will meet with the parents/guardians by arrangement and explain the services the school can provide. He/she will, with their agreement, inform the school board or a person acting on behalf of the board of their interest in enrolling their child in the school.

If parents/guardians continue to express an interest in enrolling their child in the school, the principal will, with their agreement, arrange an education assessment of the child in the school setting and request clinical services to supply the school with the relevant assessment reports. The assessment process may include consideration of reports from other educational and clinical services.

Concurrent with the education assessment process, clinic services will identify the level of service that can be provided and how this can be delivered in partnership with the schools.

If the outcome of the assessment process indicates that the child may be suitable for enrolment in the school, the principal will request parents/guardians to make written application to the board.

The board or a person acting on behalf of the board will consider the application and assessment outcomes.

On receiving written application for enrolment, the board or a person acting on behalf of the board will inform the applicants of its decision within 21 days, as prescribed by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. This decision will be copied to the DOS.

#### Outcome 1

If the board decision is to offer school enrolment to a child the parents/guardians will receive a written offer of school enrolment within 21 days, as prescribed by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

#### Outcome 2

If a board or a person acting on behalf of the board decides not to enrol a child, parents/guardians will be so informed in writing within 21 days, as prescribed by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Parents/guardians will be informed at this time that they may appeal the decision to the board.

Parents/guardians will also be informed that they have the right, under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, to appeal the decision to the Secretary-General of the Department of Education and Science. (See Note 4)

**CASE 2:** Where parents/guardians of a child who is not receiving children's services express an interest in accessing clinical services and enrolling him/her in Marino School, Sandymount School or the School of the Divine Child.

The person (DOS/principal) with whom initial contact is made by parents/guardians about accessing clinical services and school enrolment will inform his/her counterpart in clinical services/school and arrange for them to attend a joint introductory meeting with the school principal/delegate and the DOS/delegate. This meeting should be held as soon as possible and normally not later than fifteen working days after the initial enquiry.

Before attending the joint meeting, parents/guardians will be encouraged and facilitated to visit and gather information on clinical services and/or school facilities.

Parents/guardians will be advised that applications for clinical services and school enrolment are overlapping and parallel processes. The processes will be clearly explained and described in handouts given to parents/guardians at the joint meeting or at the initial enquiry stage.

They will be given written information on the school and clinic services and will be advised on the procedure and processes required to support the respective applications.

If parents/guardians decide to proceed, clinical and education assessments will be undertaken involving personnel from clinical services and school. Parents/guardians will be fully involved in the assessment process.

The outcome of the initial clinical assessment will be communicated in full to parents/guardians and, with their consent, shared with the principal and school board.

### Outcome 1

If, following the joint assessment process, the principal advises the board that school enrolment and appropriate clinical supports can be offered, he/she will ask parents/guardians to make written application for school enrolment.

The board or a person acting on behalf of the board will consider the application and assessment outcomes.

The applicant will be informed of the board's decision within 21 days, as prescribed by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. This decision will be copied to the DOS.

Where a joint decision is made to offer both clinical services and school enrolment, Enable Ireland's Children's Services will be responsible for providing clinical services. The DOS/delegate will communicate with parents/guardians regarding the extent, scope and timeframe of services being offered.

### Outcome 2

If, following the joint assessment process, the principal advises the board that school enrolment and appropriate clinical supports cannot be offered, the DOS/delegate and principal/delegate will arrange a joint meeting with parents/guardians to inform them of the decision. This decision will be confirmed in writing. Parents/guardians will be advised on how to appeal a decision should they wish to do so.

If school and clinic recommend alternative education and/or clinical services, they will facilitate parents/guardians as far as possible to contact and access these services.

### Outcome 3

If, following the joint assessment process there is **not** agreement between Children's Services and school on admission to joint services, the principal/delegate and DOS/delegate will meet with parents/guardians to inform them of the assessment outcomes and the available options.

If, thereafter, parents/guardians wish to continue with a formal application for school enrolment, the principal will ask them to apply in writing and will inform the school board of the situation.

With the consent of parents/guardians, the principal will provide the board with the findings of the joint assessment process to inform the board's decision-making.

The board or a person acting on behalf of the board will consider the application and assessment outcomes.

The applicant will be informed of the board's decision within 21 days, as prescribed by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. This decision will be copied to the DOS.

If the board decides to enrol a child without associated clinical services, parents/guardians will be informed of this. The board will liaise with the local office of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) with a view to arranging access to the clinical services identified and recommended in the services assessment process.

If parents/guardians request Enable Ireland clinical services for their child after he/she has been enrolled in the school, they will be required to make fresh application to the DOS/delegate. This application will be managed in accordance with the Enable Ireland Pathways of Services Delivery for

Children and Adults 2008.

#### Outcome 4

If the board decides **not** to offer school enrolment, parents/guardians will be so informed in writing and will be advised on the appeals process that can be followed.

If, in this instance, clinic services are offered, the DOS/Delegate will communicate with parents/guardians regarding the extent, scope and timeframe of services being offered.

#### NOTES

1. The educational 'contract' is between the school and the parents/guardians and the child; the clinical services 'contract' is between the Services and the parents/guardians and child.
2. If an application is made to an Enable Ireland School on behalf of a child already receiving children's services, the child will already have a full and comprehensive assessment and Individual Service Plan (ISP).
3. Where school and clinic services interface, the usual local planning processes, IEPs and IFSPs will operate. Schools and children's services will work collaboratively with parents/guardians.
4. If a board decision not to enrol a child is appealed to the Secretary-General under Section 29 of the Education Act, the Secretary-General will refer the appeal to an appeals committee which will, after reviewing the case, make recommendations as to the action to be taken. If the appeal is upheld, the Secretary-General will issue directions to the board and the board must act in accordance with these directions. This may result in the school being obliged to enrol the child.
5. Boards of Management are required, under Section 15 (d) of the Education Act, to have an enrolment policy which refers to the admission of students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs. Boards must ensure that, as regards the enrolment policy, principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of their choice are respected.
6. Where an application for joint services does not meet Enable Ireland access criteria the parents/guardians will be so informed. In this instance, the board of management will follow its established procedures within the framework of the school's enrolment policy.
7. The DOS and principal may forego the strict implementation of all of the admission protocols if they are in agreement that such action is feasible and acceptable to both clinic and school.

#### Implementation Date

Implementation of this Policy shall commence with effect from

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Chairperson of Board of Management)*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Principal)*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_