



12<sup>th</sup> November, 2020

**Re: Invitation to apply for the establishment and patronage of new primary schools to open in 2021**

Dear Patron/prospective Patron,

As you may be aware, in April 2018 the Government announced plans for the establishment of 42 new schools over a four-year period from 2019 to 2022. This announcement followed nationwide demographic exercises carried out by the Department into the current and future need for primary and post-primary school places across the country. Since the 2018 announcement, two additional new primary schools established in 2019 and 2020 have been announced as well as the establishment of a new Gaelcholáiste in 2020 (following an assessment of need in the relevant area and the growth of an Aonad in an existing post-primary school), and the establishment in 2021 of two additional post-primary schools bringing total numbers of new schools for demographic purposes from 2019 to 2022 to 47 schools.

The Department has recently completed the first step of a demographic review at primary level having regard to updated information on demographics and additional residential development. Following this review the Minister for Education has approved a number of changes to the list of primary schools to be established in 2021, as follows:

The establishment of the schools that were due to be established in the following school planning areas are deferred:

- Bray/Woodbrook Shanganagh
- Clondalkin\_D22
- Gurrabraher\_CorkCity
- Naas
- Kilkenny/City, Western Environs

The following school will proceed as planned:

- Sallynoggin\_Killiney\_DLR/North

The following schools, while announced as 16 classroom schools as part of the 2018 announcement will initially be established as 8 classroom schools:

- Donaghmede\_Howth\_D13
- Dublin 2\_Dublin\_4

As you may be aware, as a result of the implementation of measures to increase access to Irish-medium education as part of the patronage process announced in September 2019, the new schools in Donaghmede\_Howth\_D13 and Dublin2\_Dublin4 have been designated as Irish-medium primary schools. Accordingly, parents in these areas can express their preference for



the patronage of the schools but language preference will not be sought as part of the OPPS for these areas.

I am writing to you in relation to the commencement of the Patronage Process for the following three primary schools to be established in September 2021:

County	School Planning Area(s) to be served	School Size*	Year of Opening	Language Position
Dublin	Donaghmede_Howth_D13	8 classrooms	2021	Designated Gaelscoil
Dublin	Dublin2_Dublin4	8 classrooms	2021	Designated Gaelscoil
Dublin	Sallynoggin_Killiney_DLR/North	8 classrooms	2021	To be determined as part of the OPPS

*\*based on current projected need but will be responsive to patronage or demographic demand*

The Department is conscious that given the restrictions currently in place nationally, as well as the impact of remote working arrangements generally, that it will not be possible for patrons to engage in the normal way with communities, and much of the patronage campaigns are likely to take place in an online environment. It is anticipated that this, and other factors, may have an impact on parental engagement with this particular process. However, despite the continuing situation with regard to Covid-19, it is important that the 2021 primary patronage process gets underway as soon as possible in order that the successful incoming school patrons have sufficient time to make the necessary preparations for the schools' opening in 2021. The Department has removed the requirement for applicant patrons to submit hard copy application forms and supporting documents. Completed application forms and supporting documents should be sent by e-mail only to [patronapps@education.gov.ie](mailto:patronapps@education.gov.ie)

Each of the three schools is being established to meet a projected demographic need to cater for children living within the school planning area(s) to be served by the school and who are due to commence their primary education from 2021 onwards. Please see attached maps of each of the relevant school planning area(s) to be served.

Parental preferences are central to the patronage process. The process is designed to be fair, transparent and open to all patron bodies and prospective patrons to apply for patronage of any planned new school under this process, provided they meet the minimum requirements set down by the Department.



An Online Patronage Process System (OPPS) has been developed by the Department to provide objective information to parents which will allow them to make an informed choice about their preferred model of patronage for their child's education. In the case of the new schools for the Donaghmede\_Howth\_D13 and Dublin 2\_Dublin 4 school planning areas, these schools are designated as Irish-medium gaelscoileanna and parents of eligible children resident in these school planning areas can express a preference on the patronage of the schools. In the case of the new school for the Sallynoggin\_Killiney\_DLR/North school planning area, parents can indicate their patronage preference and are also given an opportunity to express a preference for their child to be educated through the medium of Irish or English. Parental preferences will be submitted by parents online.

The Online Patronage Process differs from the earlier processes, in that, patron bodies are no longer required to collect parental preferences and make a submission at the end of the process. The Online Patronage Process requires the patron body to complete an application form at the beginning of the process, which will provide information for parents on the OPPS website.

The Patronage Process for new schools is overseen by an external independent advisory group, the New Schools Establishment Group (NSEG). Following their consideration of the Department's assessment reports, the NSEG submits a report with recommendations to the Minister for consideration and final decision. The assessment reports and the NSEG recommendations for all such patronage processes are made available on the Department's website.

Please find attached (**Enclosure 1**), for information, a copy of the document "Arrangements for the establishment and patronage of new primary schools due to open in September 2021". This document also contains general information for applicants (**Appendix A**) who are not already patrons of existing schools with regard to the requirements which must be satisfied in relation to any application under the patronage process. Please note that meeting the requirements in this document does not confer any automatic right to become a patron of a new school. However, failure to meet these requirements by date of application may mean that a prospective patron cannot be included in the process.

Patron bodies will be requested to confirm that they will adhere to the Code of Conduct in order for their application to be finalised.

It is the applicant's sole responsibility to:

- read in its entirety and understand all of the information provided; and
- ensure that their application is complete and is in compliance with the mandatory requirements and criteria as published.

If you wish to become a patron in any of the areas outlined above, you must complete the attached Patron Application Form in full. The deadline for receipt of applications, together with any required supporting documentation is **5p.m. on the 19th November 2020**. As staff in the Department are currently working remotely given the Covid-19 related restrictions all applications must be sent electronically via email to [patronapps@education.gov.ie](mailto:patronapps@education.gov.ie).



The Department will not commence the assessment process of the Patron Application Forms until after the closing date for receipt of applications (19th November 2020) and further contact cannot be made with applicants regarding the substance of their application after the closing date.

If you have any queries in relation to the above, please e-mail them to [patronapps@education.gov.ie](mailto:patronapps@education.gov.ie).

Yours sincerely,

*Fidelma Lyons*

**Fidelma Lyons**

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**Enclosures:**

- **Enclosure 1:** Arrangements for the establishment and patronage of new primary schools due to open in September 2021

Appendix A - General Information for Prospective Patrons



## **Enclosure 1 - Arrangements for the Establishment and Patronage of New Primary Schools due to open in September 2021.**

### **Need For New School**

The following essential conditions apply to the establishment and approval of a new primary school to meet demographic need:

- The demographics of the area must support the need for the establishment of a new school – or where meeting demographic need through the extension of existing schools would leave an unmet demand for diversity of patronage.
- If the demographics require the establishment of a school, then the process for the selection of the type of school should allow for different patrons/bodies to be considered as the patron of a new school.

### **New School Process**

The process will involve the following steps for a new primary school:

- The Department will proactively identify the areas where significant additional school accommodation is required.
- Identification of locations of new schools and sizes of new schools by the Department.
- In concluding as to whether a demographic need might be met through extension projects in local schools, the Department should not seek to extend accommodation in existing schools of a certain patronage, where there is a certain level of demand for patronage of a different type in that area.
- Written applications from applicant patrons addressing all of the criteria.
- Consideration of the applications by Department officials and a report drafted for consideration by the New Schools Establishment Group (NSEG).
- Consideration by Group of the report and endorsement by Group or identification of need for further analysis by Department and subsequent consideration by the Group.
- Report from the Group submitted to the Minister for consideration.
- Decision by the Minister.

### **Criteria Considered in the Patronage Assessment Process**

The criteria considered in the patronage assessment process are the following:

- The development already achieved by recently-established schools of a particular patronage in the identified area and the potential for future growth of these schools;
- The extent or range of diversity of patronage offered across existing schools in the identified area, having regard to the views of parents;



- The proximity of schools of similar ethos to those proposed by the applicant patrons;
- How the proposed schools under the respective patrons would provide for extending or strengthening diversity of provision in each area, having regard to the views of parents;
- Parental demand for the school that an applicant patron is willing to establish;
- The extent to which schools of similar patronage in the area have already expanded to at least three streams (subject to space on an existing site etc.);
- In an area to be served by a single school, the extent to which the needs of all pupils in the area can be met by the school.

Most new school provision will be co-educational in nature and patronage decisions will be made on that basis. There may be a small number of instances where single-gender provision will need to be made if there is an identified imbalance between the capacities of single-gender schools. Any such identification would be made in advance of seeking applications from applicant patrons.

For most new schools, parents will be surveyed on language of preference. New schools will be designated as an Irish-medium Gaelscoil if there is no existing Irish-medium provision in the school planning area, or where a number of new schools are due to be established in the same school planning area, at least one of these schools will be designated as an Irish-medium school, unless there are particular local circumstances where this is not considered appropriate.

An applicant who is not already an existing school patron will need to ensure they have put certain requirements in place in advance of making an application for patronage under the new school process. In this regard, Appendix A outlines general information for prospective patrons on the requirements to be put in place.

**Department of Education**  
**November 2020**



## Appendix A – General Information for Prospective Patrons

### **Patronage Responsibility**

A school patron has significant responsibilities which relate to the whole school community comprising teachers, students, parents and the wider community served by the school. A prospective school patron therefore needs to be able to demonstrate sufficient structure, continuity and reliability to conduct the responsible functions of a patron:

### **Patronage Functions**

- Appointment of the school's board of management
- Suspension, if necessary, of the board of management
- Responsibility for the school's characteristic spirit, for which the board of management is accountable to the patron
- Ultimate responsibility/liability for industrial relations
- Responsibility for school property (and insurance)
- Financial matters – annual budgets and reports
- Decisions on school status such as extension, amalgamation, closure

### **Status of Patron Body**

A prospective Patron needs to be able to demonstrate a capability to conduct the Patron responsibilities in an ongoing way.

For an individual or group that is not a statutory body or otherwise formed with a constitution providing satisfactorily for succession and continuity, it would be considered necessary to establish a corporate entity, such as a company limited by guarantee. The patronage body should articulate its educational philosophy and educational objectives in a memorandum and articles of association, or other constitutional documentation. Three persons should be provided as directors or trustees. A patron body should be registered for charitable status with the Charities Regulatory Authority.

Meeting the requirements above does not confer any automatic right to become a patron of a new school.

### **Education Act, 1998**

The role of the school patron is referenced throughout the Education Act, 1998 and prospective patrons should ensure that they are familiar with all aspects of the Act, in particular, Parts 2 and 4 of the Act, which relate to schools and to boards of management respectively.

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/1998/a5198.pdf>

### **Disclaimer:**

Please note that this information is not intended as a legal interpretation of the Education Act 1998. It is intended as general information only.

**Department of Education  
November 2020**