

School Data Collection FAQs for Primary Schools

General

1. What will the information sought be used for?

The information sought will be used for statistical and school planning purposes. It will not have a direct impact on a school's allocations or resources.

2. Why is it important to provide the information sought?

It is very important for the Department to have up to date information to enable it to carry out its planning functions. Information provided by schools is key to ensuring that the data used in those planning processes is accurate and current.

3. Is it okay to provide this information in the context of GDPR?

As the SDC collects aggregate information only there are no data protection issues with providing this information.

School Governance

1. What is Section 62(10)(b) of the Admissions Act?

Currently the Admission to Schools Act 2018 provides that a school may not take into account in deciding on admission to the school or placing an application on a waiting list, a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school.

There are two exceptions to this provision 1) a school can include a selection criteria for siblings and 2) schools are allowed to take into account a student's connection to a school by virtue of a family member (i.e. a parent or a grandparent) having previously attended the school when deciding on an application for admission to that school subject to a limit of 25% on the number of places that can be filled by a school using this criterion.

The Department is seeking to review the impact of this provision on school enrolment.

2. What if the school doesn't provide any priority to pupils whose parents/ grandparents attended the school?

In this instance you should answer **No** to Question 1 relating to this section and you will not be asked any further questions on this topic.

3. What additional information is requested?

Question 2 and Question 3 relate to the number of selection criterion that your school has for admission, and where the criterion relating to past pupils is placed in the ranking order. The remaining questions (4-9) relate to the maximum percentage of places that the school will allocate for children of past pupils, and the actual number of places allocated for the past 3 years.

4. What is the purpose of the collection of data relating to religion in school admissions policies?

Section 11 of the admissions act amended the Equal Status Act 2000 to remove, in the case of recognised primary schools, the provision that permitted such schools to use religion as a selection criterion in school admissions. However, there is a provision to ensure that a child of a minority faith, can access a school of their faith.

Section 11 requires that a review of this section be undertaken 5 years after commencement, and the questions put to schools will assist the Department in their statutory duty to undertake this review.

5. What information does the Department require?

Questions 1 to 6 relate to over subscription in your school over the last 5 years. These are all yes/no answers. If your school was not over-subscribed over the past 5 years you will go straight to the next question relating to the ethos of the school.

6. What is the ethos of my school?

Questions 7-10 contain questions on the ethos of your school. The ethos of your school is reflected in the characteristic spirit described in your schools admissions policy.

If your school does not have a religious ethos, you will not be required to answer any more questions relating to section 11 of the act.

7. What information will I be asked for relating to religion as a selection criterion in my school?

Questions 11-16 ask if your school has provided a priority for pupils of a particular faith since 2018.

Planning and Building Unit

8. In question 26, what is meant by eligible pupils?

Eligible pupils (As per School Admissions Policy)

9. In question 27, if I have been approved as, for example, a 3 stream school and I have accommodation for this, but the third stream has not been developed yet, do I include the junior infants in my answer that I could accommodate in my vacant accommodation of the third stream was developed?

The answer is yes. The best way to demonstrate this is by way of an example using the scenario below, which is replicable for all school sizes:

A school is built with 24 classrooms, which is a 3-stream school. Therefore, it can accommodate 3 junior infant intakes. However, it only currently has 2 junior infant intakes and neither of these class groupings are full.

Therefore, when completing Q27, the response should be the sum of the number of additional pupils that could be accommodated in the existing 2 junior infant class plus the number of junior infants that can be accommodated in the vacant third (stream) junior infant class.