Subject: **OPEN ENROLMENT IN NURSERY, PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS –TIMETABLES**	**Circular Number:** **2026/18** **Date of Issue:** **13 October 2026**
Target Audience: • Principals and Boards of Governors of all Grant-Aided Nursery Schools, Grant-Aided Primary Schools and Grant-Aided Post-Primary Schools; • Education Authority; and • The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.	**Governor Awareness:** Essential
Summary of Contents: This Circular provides the Open Enrolment timetables for Pre-School, Primary and Post-Primary Schools for admissions to take place in September 2027.	**Status of Contents:** Advice for Principals and Boards of Governors **Related Documents:** 2026/21 (Open Enrolment in Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes in Primary Schools) 2026/20 (Open Enrolment in Primary Schools) 2026/19 (Procedure for Transfer from Primary to Post Primary Schools) **Superseded Documents:** 2025/11 **Expiry Date:** Not Applicable
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INTRODUCTION

1. This Circular provides the timetables for Preschool, Primary and Post-Primary Schools Open Enrolment admissions to take place in September 2027.

2. This Circular should be read in conjunction with the corresponding Open Enrolment Circular as appropriate, i.e. for Nursery Schools – Circular number 2026/21, for Primary Schools – Circular number 2026/20 and for Post Primary Schools – Circular number 2026/19.

3. This Circular will be updated annually and re-issued accordingly.



CRAIG BOYD
School Admissions Team

OPEN ENROLMENT IN PRE-SCHOOL

TIMETABLE – ADMISSION SEPTEMBER 2027

October/November 2026	Boards of Governors/Management Committees review admissions policies.
No later than Thursday 12 November 2026	Pre-Schools return amended admissions criteria to Education Authority (EA).
Wednesday 9 December 2026	EA publishes information on website about the pre-school admissions procedure and admissions criteria for schools/providers.
Wednesday 6 January 2027 (opens 12 noon) During the admissions procedure applications are not considered on a 'First Come First Served Basis'.	**Stage 1 - Pre-School application procedure opens for Target Age/Final Pre-School year applications only** (includes deferrals, not late deferrals). **Note**: When an application is submitted the applicant **must** provide supporting documents **if requested** by **ANY** preference listed. (An applicant must read the published admissions criteria of their listed preferences to find out if any documentation is requested by a pre-school provider). In addition to any documents required the applicant **must** also upload or submit the **CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE**. Any applicant in receipt of benefit defined under the 'Socially Disadvantaged' criterion **must provide verification**. . **Stage 2** opens on Thursday 18 March 2027 includes applications related to deferrals/late deferrals and penultimate age children.
Wednesday 20 January 2027 at 12 noon **Note: Online Portal will not be accessible after this date/time to apply**. Will reopen in Stage 2 of pre-school	Date/time by which applicants submit application and documents in support of their application. **After 12.00 noon on 20 January 2027 applicants cannot apply until Stage 2 opens on 18 March 2027.** **NB Information for pre-schools -** It is important that pre-schools which are oversubscribed with applications, and which consider themselves covered by the terms of the duty to verify study carefully the 'Duty to Verify' guidance published by

procedure.	Dept. of Education. The date of 20 January 2027 @12 noon is not a deadline date for 'Duty to Verify' to be exercised.
IMPORTANT - During Stage 1, <u>it is extremely important</u> that pre-school settings check EA Connect regularly for applications at any preference and make timely decisions. Applications need to move on to other listed preferences where not selected at a higher preference in order to deliver the timetable on time.	
On or before Tuesday 26 January 2027	As appropriate PEG will notify any settings where there has been amendment to their provisional allocation of funded places.
STAGE ONE – CONSIDERATION OF TARGET AGE/FINAL PRE-SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN (NOT APPLICATIONS RELATING TO LATE DEFERRALS)	
On or before Friday 5 February 2027	**IMPORTANT - Date by which providers select children at first preferences for Stage 1.** Applications not selected at 1st preference will automatically move to their next preference pre-school setting for processing including all documents uploaded in support of the application. This process continues until the child has been accepted or all preferences exhausted.
On or before Friday 12 February 2027	PEG consider playgroups with less than eight applications at **Stage 1** for withdrawal.
Thursday 4 March 2027 (by 5pm).	**Pre-School PAN / Temporary Flexibility Decisions** - PEG/DE (as applicable) will issue decisions by this date/time. (**Note**: that the issuing of decisions will resume on 18 March 2027 following the close of Pre-School Stage 1).
Friday 12 March 2027	**<u>Close of Stage 1 Admissions Application processing for pre schools.</u>** **<u>Refer to 18 March 2027 date - Notifications to be received on that day by applicants</u>**
Thursday 18 March 2027	Stage 1 applicants receive notification of outcome of application on 18 March 2027 by email, where one is held, or by letter from EA or where applicable from the Pre-School provider EA notifies applicants of children who have not yet secured a funded place and asks for further preferences to be submitted. (Pre-Schools seek

	verification documents from applicants where applicable).
END OF STAGE ONE	

STAGE TWO – INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF TARGET AGE CHILDREN WHO HAVE NOT SECURED A PLACE, APPLICATIONS RELATING TO DEFERRALS/LATE DEFERRALS AND PENULTIMATE* AGE CHILDREN	
Thursday 18 March 2027	**Stage 2 - Pre-School application procedure opens for <u>Target Age and Penultimate Age</u> applications.** EA publishes information on its website on pre-schools where funded places remain available. ***penultimate = underage**
Monday 22 March 2027	Date from which applicants can lodge a Nursery Stage 1 Admissions Appeal (Applicable to Nursery Schools/Primary School Nursery Units)
Wednesday 31 March 2027 (not later than 4pm)	Deadline for receipt of appeal forms for **Nursery - Stage 1** to be received by EA **(not later than 4pm).**
Wednesday 12 May 2027 (Not later than 4pm)	Deadline for receipt of further preferences, applications and supporting documents (Treated as Punctual):- - further preferences where not offered a place in Stage 1; - target age applications; and - penultimate age applications. Deadline for receipt of:- - another preference(s)/supporting documents for an applicant who declined a Stage 1 offer (Treated as late); **After 4pm on 12 May 2027 applicants cannot apply until after the close of Stage 2 of the pre-school admissions procedure on 11 June 2027.** Funded places available list will be published on the EA website on 11 June 2027. **Note: Additional funded places will not be granted to a provider for a child who has already been offered a funded place in another setting.**

IMPORTANT - During Stage 2, <u>it is extremely important</u> that pre-school settings check EA Connect regularly for applications at any preference and make timely decisions. Applications need to move on to other listed preferences where not selected at a higher preference in order to deliver the timetable on time.	
Wednesday 26 May 2027 (by 5pm).	**PEG consider within Stage 2 playgroups with less than eight applications for withdrawal.** **Pre-School PAN / Temporary Flexibility Decisions** - PEG/DE (as applicable) will issue decisions by this date/time. (**Note**: that the issuing of decisions will resume on 11 June 2027 following the close of Pre-School Stage 2).
Wednesday 9 June 2027	**<u>Close of Pre-School Stage 2 Admissions Application processing for pre schools.</u>** **<u>Refer to 11 June 2027 date – i.e. date applicants receive application outcome.</u>**
Friday 11 June 2027	Applicants receive outcome of Stage 2 application by email where one is held or by letter from the EA or from the pre-school. EA publishes information on website on pre-schools where funded places remain available. Further guidance on how to apply after close of Stage 2 will be available.
Monday 14 June 2027	Date from which applicants can lodge a Nursery Stage 2 Admissions Appeal (Applicable to Nursery Schools/Primary School Nursery Units)
Wednesday 23 June 2027 (Not later than 4pm)	Deadline for receipt of appeal forms for Nursery - Stage 2 to be received by EA **(not later than 4pm).**
June-August 2027	Independent Tribunals hear appeals.

OPEN ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

TIMETABLE – ADMISSION SEPTEMBER 2027

October/November 2026	The Department of Education to notify enrolment and admission numbers for each school, where a change is being proposed, to the Board of Governors.
October/November 2026	Boards of Governors review admissions policies.
No later than Thursday 12 November 2026	Schools return amended admissions criteria to EA
Wednesday 9 December 2026	EA publishes information on website about the primary one admissions procedure and admissions criteria for schools. ***Note:** Final date for publication of prospectuses by primary schools. (Not later than 6 weeks before applicants express preferences).*
Wednesday 6 January 2027 (opens 12 noon) During the admissions procedure applications are not considered on a 'First Come First Served Basis'	**Primary One application procedure opens with online portal available** Note: When an application is submitted an applicant must provide supporting documents* **if** requested by **ANY** preference listed. (An applicant must read the published admissions criteria of their listed preferences to find out if any documentation is requested by a school). *In addition to any documents required the applicant **must** also provide **the CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE.**
Wednesday 20 January 2027 at 12.00 noon **Note:** Online Portal will not be accessible after this date/time to apply.	Date/time by which applicants submit an application and documents in support of their application **After 12.00 noon on 20 January 2027 applicants cannot apply until after the close of procedure on 18 March 2027.**

	NB Information for schools - it is important that schools which are oversubscribed with applications, and which consider themselves covered by the terms of the duty to verify, study carefully the 'Duty to Verify' guidance published by the Dept of Education. The date of 20 January 2027 is not a deadline date for 'Duty to Verify' to be exercised.
On or before Friday 5 February 2027	Date by which primary schools select pupils at first preference stage. Applications not selected at first preference will automatically move to their next preference school for processing including all documents uploaded in support of the application. This process continues until the child has been accepted or all preferences exhausted.
Friday 12 March 2027	Close of P1 Admissions Application processing for schools Refer to 18 March 2027 for notification of application outcome.
Thursday 18 March 2027	Applicants receive notification of outcome of application on 18 March 2027 by email where one is held or by letter. Schools may choose to notify decision by letter for receipt by applicants on 18 March 2027. (Schools seek verification documents from applicants where applicable). EA notifies applicants of children who have not yet secured a place and asks for further preferences to be submitted. EA publishes information on website on schools where P1 places remain available and late application information with EA online portal open for late applications.
Monday 22 March 2027	Date from which applicants can lodge a P1 Admissions Appeal
Wednesday 31 March 2027 (not later than 4pm)	Deadline for receipt of appeal forms for **P1** to be received by EA **(not later than 4 pm).**
June-August 2027	Independent Tribunals hear appeals.

OPEN ENROLMENT IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

TIMETABLE – ADMISSION SEPTEMBER 2027

24 September 2026	Closing date for registration for academic selection (SEAG).
October/November 2026	Boards of Governors review admissions policies
October/November 2026	The Department of Education to notify enrolment and admission numbers, for each school where a change is being proposed, to the Board of Governors.
No later than Thursday 12 November 2026	Schools return amended admissions criteria to EA.
Saturday 14 November 2026	SEAG Assessment Paper 1
Saturday 21 November 2026	SEAG Assessment Paper 2
Wednesday 9 December 2026	EA publishes information on the EA website about post-primary schools admissions procedure and admissions criteria for schools.
Wednesday 20 January 2027	Final date for publication of prospectuses by post-primary schools. (Not later than six weeks before applicants express preferences).
Saturday 23 January 2027	Results of Entrance Test (SEAG) received by applicants.
Wednesday 27 January 2027 (opens 12 noon)	**Post-primary application process opens with online portal available (from 12 noon) for applicants to apply for Year 8 admission.** Note: When an application is submitted an applicant must provide supporting documents* **if** requested by **ANY** preference listed. (An applicant must read the published admissions criteria of their listed preferences to find out if any documentation is requested by a school). *In addition to any documents required the applicant **must** also provide **the CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE.**
Wednesday 3 March 2027 (closes 12 noon)	**Online portal closes at 12 noon for Year 8 post-primary applications.**

	Last date/time for applicants to communicate FSME. **Note: After 12.00 noon on 3 March 2027 applicants cannot apply until after the close of procedure on 8 May 2027.**
Wednesday 24 March 2027	On or before this date post-primary schools select first preference applications. Thereafter the clearing house processing of applications continues until the end of the post-primary admissions procedure.
Wednesday 14 April 2027	Last date for schools to request temporary variations from the Department of Education. Requests received after this date may not be progressed.
Tuesday 4 May 2027	Close of Year 8 Transfer Admissions Application processing for schools. Schools prepare any correspondence for issue to applicants.
Saturday 8 May 2027 (Admissions procedure for Year 8 closes)	Applicants receive notification of outcome of applications on **Saturday 8 May 2027 via email, where one is held, or letter.** EA online portal open. Schools may choose to notify decision by post/email for receipt by applicants on **Saturday 8 May 2027**. (Verification documents asked for by schools, if relevant, from applicants). EA notifies applicants of children who have not yet secured a place and asks applicants to nominate further preferences. EA publishes information on website on schools where Year 8 places remain available and late application information.
Tuesday 11 May 2027	Date from which parents can lodge a Year 8 Post Primary Appeal - online appeal portal open at 9am

Thursday 20 May 2027 (closes 4pm)	Deadline for receipt of appeal forms against Year 8 decisions by post-primary schools. Online Appeal Portal closes at 4pm.
June-August 2027	Independent Tribunals hear appeals.

OPEN ENROLMENT IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (14+ DICKSON PLAN)

TIMETABLE – ADMISSION SEPTEMBER 2027

November 2026	EA Admissions agree Timetable with Junior High Schools (JHS) and Senior High Schools (SHS) Principals
November/December 2026	The Department of Education notify enrolment and admission numbers, for each school where a change is being proposed, to the Board of Governors.
November 2026	SHS commence review of Admissions Criteria.
December 2026	JHS return Year 10 pupil lists to EA. SHS return amended admissions criteria to EA.
Monday 1 March 2027	EA publishes information on website about the JHS to SHS transfer procedure and Admissions Criteria for SHS. ***Note:*** *Final date for publication of prospectuses by SHS. (Not later than six weeks before applicants express their preferences).*
Monday 5 April 2027 (12 noon)	**JHS to SHS application procedure opens with online portal available (from 12 noon) for applicants to apply for Year 11 admission in a SHS.** **Note:** When an application is submitted, applicants must provide the appropriate supporting documents***** if requested by **ANY** of the preferences listed. *******In addition to any documents required the applicant **must** also provide **the CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE**.*
Wednesday 5 May 2027 (12 noon)	**Online portal closes at 12 noon for JHS to SHS applications.** **Note:** The online portal will not be accessible for JHS-SHS applications after this date/time.

Friday 7 May 2027	On or before this date, JHS transfer pupil rank order data to SHS.

Monday 10 May 2027	On or before this date SHS commences selection of first preference applications. Thereafter the clearing house processing of applications continues until the end of the JHS-SHS admissions procedure.
Friday 14 May 2027	Close of JHS-SHS Transfer Procedure. Schools prepare any correspondence for issue to applicants.
Saturday 15 May 2027	Applicants receive notification of outcome of applications on **Saturday, 15 May 2027 via email, where one is held, or by letter.** EA Connect opens for new late applications. Schools may choose to notify decision by post/email for receipt by applicants on **Saturday, 15 May 2027**. (Verification documents asked for by schools, if relevant, from applicants). EA notifies applicants of children who have not yet secured a place **on Saturday, 15 May 2027 via email, where one is held, or by letter** and requests applicants to nominate further preferences. EA publishes information on the EA website on how to submit a late application.
Tuesday 18 May 2027	Date from which applicants can lodge a Year 11 SHS Admissions Appeal. EA contacts applicants of children who have not been allocated a school place for Year 11 advising on how to submit further preferences.
Friday 28 May 2027 (4 pm)	Deadline for receipt of appeal forms against Year 11 decisions by SHS (**not later than 4 pm).** **NB** An appeal cannot be lodged against a school outside the two-tier system (Dickson Plan) where

	places are not available.
June-August 2027	Independent Admissions Tribunals hear appeals.

In this timetable where it refers to ‘documents in support’ of an applicant’s application this means documentation such as birth certificate (in the case of admission to pre-school and primary) and any documentation/information that may be requested in the published admissions criteria of the preference(s) listed by an applicant.