An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Apply to Schools

FAQ's

2026

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1. What is Apply to School?

"Apply to School" is a new online system where parents and guardians can apply for a first-year place in a participating post-primary school

2. Which schools are participating?

There are 22 post-primary schools participating for the 2027/2028 school year. These schools are:

School #	Location	School Name	Type	Ethos
1	Athenry	Presentation College	Mixed	Multi Denominational
2	Athenry	Clárin College	Mixed	Multi Denominational
3	Athenry	Coláiste an Eachréidh	Mixed	Catholic
4	Celbridge	Salesian College	Boys	Catholic
5	Celbridge	St Wolstan's Community School	Girls	Inter Denominational
6	Celbridge	Celbridge Community School	Mixed	Multi Denominational
7	Clonakilty	Sacred Heart Secondary School	Girls	Catholic
8	Clonakilty	Clonakilty Community College	Mixed	Inter Denominational
9	Greystones	St David's Holy Faith Secondary	Mixed	Catholic
10	Greystones	Temple Carrig Secondary School	Mixed	Church of Ireland
11	Greystones	Greystones Community College	Mixed	Multi Denominational
12	Kilbeggan	Meán Scoil an Chlochair	Mixed	Catholic
13	Kilcoole	Coláiste Chraobh Abhann	Mixed	Multi Denominational
14	Maynooth	Maynooth PPS	Mixed	Multi Denominational
15	Maynooth	Maynooth CC	Mixed	Multi Denominational
16	Maynooth	Gaelcholáiste Mhaigh Nuad	Mixed	Multi Denominational
17	Oranmore	Calasanctius College	Mixed	Catholic
18	Roscarberry	Mount St Michael	Mixed	Catholic
19	Tullamore, Killina	Colaiste Choilm	Boys	Catholic
20	Tullamore, Killina	Sacred Heart Secondary School	Girls	Catholic
21	Tullamore, Killina	Killina Presentation Secondary School	Mixed	Catholic
22	Tullamore, Killina	Tullamore College	Mixed	Multi Denominational

3. What are the benefits for schools involved?

Alleviating the burden and stress for principals and schools is one of the primary objectives of this expanded project. The benefits for schools are:

- **Efficiency**: Reduces paperwork and administrative workload for school staff - school staff will no longer need to manually transfer students from POD to PPOD
- **Better data management**: Centralised applications provide accurate information for planning and enrolment
- **Equity**: Ensures all applicants follow the same process and timelines
- **Control**: Schools retain full control on admissions decisions

4. What are the benefits for parents/guardians?

Some key benefits of the Apply to School for parents/guardians include:

- A single application form to apply to school(s)
- Earlier certainty on your child's school place
- Real time tracking of your application status
- Fair and transparent process

5. How do I access the system?

The Apply to School online application form is a new system developed by the Department of Education and Youth. When the system goes live for 2027/28, it can be accessed at www.applytoschool.ie.

6. How do I navigate the system?

Please refer to the System user guide and training video for support in navigating the system. We will continue to refine the contents of these materials, based on user feedback, and will make them available online at Go-Live. Training Guide Video Link here.

7. Can a parent/guardian apply for more than one school in an area?

Yes, the Department strongly recommends that all parents/guardians apply to multiple schools, especially if the school of choice is popular.

8. What happens if a child does not secure a place at their school of choice or if the school is oversubscribed?

The Apply to School pilot will not change the current admissions policies of schools. Schools can continue to operate waiting list and oversubscription criteria.

The Department of Education and Youth will engage with schools, Patrons and Management bodies if enrolment pressures arise in an area.

9. Can a parent/guardian indicate their preferred school?

No, the Apply to School system does not allow parents/guardians to rank schools in order of preference.

10. What is the position regarding Data Protection and Governance?

Please refer to the Department's website (www.gov.ie/applytoschool) to view the Data Privacy notice and for full details on how personal data is processed securely and in full compliance with Data Protection legislation.

11. Does this system replace all existing school processes?

No. The system streamlines the admissions process in line with legislation already in place. Individual schools retain full control over the administration and decision making on applications.

12. How does the system support audit trails/record keeping?

An audit trail is available within the system and includes key metadata associated with the application process. Schools will be able to view information such as the date an application was created, the date it was last amended, and details of the most recent user to make changes to the application. This information will be available when reviewing submitted applications.

13. Will participating schools have access to the system before it goes live?

Yes, participating schools will be provided with access to the system in a "sandbox" this is a safe practice environment where school staff can familiarize themselves with the system. Access to this practice system will be available from 3 September 2026 until 11 September 2026.

14. What supports are in place for participating schools?

A dedicated support team will be available to participating schools, they can be contacted by email on helpdesk_applytoschool@education.gov.ie. Additionally, we will have optional daily "drop in" Microsoft Teams sessions from 3 September 2026 to 11 September 2026 to ensure that participating schools have daily access to a member of the support team. These "drop in" sessions will be repeated when the system is live from 1 October 2026.

15. What training material will be provided to participating schools?

Comprehensive documentation will be provided to participating schools, including user guides, videos, and step-by-step guidance on the use of the School Hub dashboard. The documentation will also be made available on the department's. In addition to the documentation provided, participating schools will have access to a member of the support team in a daily "drop in" session, and via our dedicated helpdesk helpdesk_applytoschool@education.gov.ie.

16. How will parents/guardians be supported throughout the process?

Parents and guardians will be provided with guidance materials, including user guides, videos and frequently asked questions.

These materials will include contact details for Department helpdesk support in relation to technical issues associated with the online application process, including access issues, document uploads and system functionality.

Queries relating to admissions policies, admissions criteria, waiting lists or decisions regarding the allocation of places will remain matters for the relevant school.

17. What if a parent/guardian needs assistance in completing the online application?

If a parent or guardian needs assistance in completing the online application, they are being advised to contact the school they want to apply to for help with the application process.

18. Who do I contact if I have technical issues?

If you experience any technical issues with the form or system, please contact the following email: helpdesk_applytoschool@education.gov.ie.

19. What are the key dates/deadlines for the expanded pilot?

- **3-11 September 2026** - participating schools will have access to a practice system, known as the Sandbox.
- **1 October 2026** - apply to school is open for online applications for 2027 school places
- **22 October 2026** - deadline for applications, all applications received after this date are deemed to be "late applications"
- **12 November 2026** - round 1 offer day
- **20 November 2026** - deadline for parents/guardians to accept or decline offers

- **27 November 2026** - synchronised update of PPOD (this will identify students that have accepted multiple school places)
- **30 November 2026** - deadline for parents/guardians to respond regarding acceptance of multiple school places
- **14 December 2026** - final update to PPOD.

20. Will I have to wait three weeks before I can access the application lists?

No, application data can be accessed in real time, however, schools should not issue offers before the agreed date of 12 November 2026. A key objective of the expanded pilot is synchronicity of admissions timelines/processes across the participating schools.

21. Will the school receive the same application information they currently receive?

No, schools will not receive the same application information they currently receive. The application form will initially collect only the information relevant to a child applying to a school(s).

22. Will the Department support schools in collecting extra data needed for enrolment?

Yes, the department will support schools in collecting additional data at acceptance stage and data required for PPOD.

23. Why isn't all enrolment information being collected at once?

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), only necessary personal data will be collected at application stage. The application form is solely to determine a child's eligibility for a school place, and therefore only data required for that purpose will be requested.

Further personal data will only be requested once a school place has been offered and accepted. This approach ensures compliance with data protection principles such as data minimisation, purpose limitation, and lawfulness of processing.

24. What documents are required to be uploaded with the application?

Parents/Guardians will be required to upload

- The student's birth certificate
- 2 Proofs of address
- Any relevant documents to support an application for a Special Class place.

Parents/guardians are advised that the school will contact them directly if any other documents are required to progress their application.

For special class placement the documents required are:

Professional report(s) outlining diagnosis (by a psychologist, psychiatrist, multi-disciplinary report)

AND

A demonstration of the understanding of complexity of the child's overall level of need/s evidenced in the professional reports

AND

~~A~~ clear professional recommendation as to what educational placement type would be most appropriate to best meet the child's needs, along with the rationale for same

AND

A letter from the NCSE confirming that the child is known to them and that the child has the required diagnosis and recommendation for a special class for autism.

25. How can this documentation be submitted?

Documents can be uploaded directly through the Apply to School hub as part of the application.

- If parents/guardians are using a mobile device, they can simply take a photo of the document and upload it
- If parents/guardians are using a desktop or laptop computer, they can upload saved files from their device.

26. What happens after a parent/guardian submits the application?

When the form is successfully submitted, parents/guardians will receive an acknowledgment by email from the following email address: applytoschool@education.gov.ie

This will include a summary of the application submitted.

- The application form will be reviewed by the chosen school(s) in line with the individual school's admission criteria within the timeframe for processing applications.
- When an application is successfully submitted through ApplyToSchool, it becomes available to the school through the ApplyToSchool portal.
- Schools may also receive email notifications advising that a new application has been received.

27. Who receives a summary of the application once submitted if additional contacts are provided on the application form?

The registered account holder will get an email with a summary of the application after submission.

28. What are the next steps for a school user?

- **Review Submitted Application**: Open the application record, verify all required information and supporting documents, and check eligibility against the school admissions policy.
- **Record Any Minor Amendments**: Record any minor corrections, clarifications, or administrative updates made during review.
- **Determine Eligibility Category**: Assess the application against the published admissions criteria and select the appropriate eligibility category.
- **Conduct Preliminary Assessment**: Review the application and determine the preliminary outcomes such as Place Offered, Waiting List, No Place Offered, or Further Review Required.
- **Record Reason for No Offer (if applicable)**: If a place is not offered, record the reason and assign a waiting list number where applicable.

29. When do I "reveal" the offer?

Round 1: 12 November 2026 - make the assessment outcome visible to the applicant when the school is ready to communicate decisions.

Reveal Status and Offer Publication

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Commented [FD2R1]: Seems good to me Tracy

- The Reveal function allows schools to control when an individual applicant's assessment outcome is published in the Apply to Schools system.
- Applicants cannot view any offer, waiting list status, or admission decision before the official First Round Offer Date, even if an application has been marked as Revealed.
- Once the Offer Management Form becomes available, schools can reveal assessment outcomes individually. This is particularly useful for late applications or applications requiring further review, which can remain unrevealed until all information has been verified.
- While the Department controls when offers become available to applicants, schools remain responsible for deciding when each individual application outcome is revealed.
- This ensures that decisions are only published when the school's review is complete.

30. What happens after I press reveal?

From a **school** perspective, you will be able to:

- monitor applicant responses
- confirm accepted or declined offers
- process waiting lists where required

- Record any final outcomes

From an **applicant** perspective, they will be able to:

- View any offer that has been made
- Choose to accept or decline any offer made
- Withdraw their application

If an **applicant is on a waiting list**, they can:

- View their waiting list status
- Receive communication from the school regarding their waiting list status

If no placed is offered to an applicant, they can view their waiting list status and await further communication from the school.

Waiting List Management

- Waiting list numbers are assigned once only and should not be changed.
- Positions are determined by the school's admissions procedures and allocation process.
- The Apply to Schools system does not automatically generate waiting list positions.
- Schools are responsible for maintaining waiting list records and audit trails.
- The Waiting List Management panel allows schools to record and track the current waiting list position being processed.

Commented [TT3]: @FoleyGT, David Is this enough information here?

Commented [FD4R3]: Seems good to me Tracy

31. How will I know if a place has been accepted or declined

- After the assessment outcome has been revealed, the applicant can log in to the Apply to School portal and respond to any place offered. School users should monitor the applicant's Response to Offer field to see whether the offer has been accepted or declined.
- Once a response has been received, update the “Confirm Applicant's Response” to Mainstream/Special Educational Needs or both Place Offer field and record the appropriate final outcome.

Examples of final outcomes include place secured, offer declined, withdrawn, waiting list. no place offered.

32. Where can I see a count of the places offered/available/accepted/declined?

School users can use the filters on the Applications Dashboard to view and count applications by status. Filters can be applied to identify applicants who have been offered a place, accepted an offer, declined an offer, or are on a waiting list. Available places can be determined by comparing the number of places secured against the school's admissions

capacity. This enables schools to monitor admissions activity and make offers from the waiting list where vacancies arise.

33. How can I manage late applications?

Applications received after the closing date will be classified as late applications. These applications will normally be considered after all on-time applications have been processed, unless exceptional circumstances apply. Late applications will be managed by the relevant school in accordance with its admissions procedures.

34. How do I notify a parent/guardian if they have a place, after the initial round of offers?

If a place becomes available after the initial round of offers, the notification should be clear, positive, and include a response deadline.

35. Must a school participate in the next phase of the Apply to School pilot?

No. It must however be noted that participation at this stage provides schools with an opportunity to engage directly with the department during the ongoing development process of the Apply to School system. This is important as the rollout of the Apply to School Common Application System forms part of the Government's broader commitment to modernise and streamline the school admissions process for parents and schools. Feedback from participating schools continues to play an important role in shaping future enhancements and ensuring that the system meets the practical needs of schools and families.

36. How do I appeal a decision made on an application?

Appeals can be made under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Please refer to the department's website for information on appeals https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/policy-information/school-admissionsenrolment/

37. Where can I get general information about the policy on school admissions and appeals?

More information on school admissions can be found on the Department's website - https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/policy-information/school-admissionsenrolment/.

More information on the appeals process can be found on the Department's website - https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/appeals-in-relation-to-refusal-to-admit-a-student-for-a-reason-other-than-the-school-being-oversubscribed/

