

## Department Of Education And Science

### Primary Branch

### To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and all Teaching Staff in Primary Schools

## Determination of Valid Enrolment in Primary Schools

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this circular is to clarify policy regarding valid enrolment and to stress the importance of ensuring that returns accurately reflect valid enrolments.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The staffing of a school for a particular year is (with the exception of cases where developing school criteria apply) determined by reference to the number of pupils enrolled on 30<sup>th</sup> September of the previous year. The enrolment on that date also determines the level of capitation grants payable to a school. It is vital, in order to ensure the proper allocation of publicly funded resources and to facilitate the equitable resourcing of schools that accurate returns of valid enrolments are submitted to the Department.
- 2.2 An analysis of a sample of returns for the school year 2001/2002 indicated that a proportion of returns did not accurately reflect valid enrolments. It is hoped that this circular will assist schools in ensuring that returns made are accurate.

### 3. Current Policy regarding Valid Enrolment

- 3.1 A child may not be allowed to attend or be enrolled in a primary school before the fourth anniversary of his/her birth. A copy of the child's birth certificate should be obtained and retained in school records. The PPSN number of the child should also be obtained at the time of enrolment.
- 3.2 A child can only be enrolled in one school on the 30<sup>th</sup> September. It is expected that children who enrol in a school should continue to be enrolled in that school for the duration of the school year. However, there are exceptions to this policy where children must leave a school on a permanent basis due to relocation of the family, where a child is transferred to a special school, or other exceptional circumstances. ***It is***

***emphasised, however, that, for staffing and capitation purposes, a pupil can be included in the enrolment of only one school in any school year.***

- 3.3 The transfer of pupils from one school to another school should be for valid reasons as indicated under 3.2 above. If, upon investigation, it is held that pupil transfers are facilitated merely to retain or create an additional teaching post, the post will be suppressed.
- 3.4 The Primary School curriculum is designed as an eight year programme, including a two year infant cycle followed by six years in standards from first to sixth, with children progressing to the next grade at the end of each school year. The primary curriculum is flexible and child-centred, and can be adapted to meet children's learning needs.

The terms of Circular 11/01 regarding the retention of pupils must be strictly adhered to and any pupil enrolled contrary to the terms of that Circular shall be discounted in determining the valid enrolment.

#### **4. Determination of Valid Enrolment where the Terms of this Circular are Breached.**

- 4.1 Boards of Management and Principal teachers should ensure that the terms of this circular are complied with. The Department will put in place enhanced measures to assess the accuracy of returns and thereby strengthen the integrity of the resource allocation process and the equitable treatment of schools.

Boards of Management and Principal teachers will appreciate the obligation on the Department to ensure that publicly funded resources are properly allocated.

Accordingly, breaches of the provisions of this circular will be regarded as serious matters.

#### **5. Penalties which may be imposed where the Terms of this Circular are Breached.**

- 5.1 Where a teacher, principal or Board of Management have falsified or collaborated in falsifying the enrolment on the 30<sup>th</sup> September, action will be taken in accordance with the terms of Rule 108 of the Rules for National Schools.

Copies of this Circular should be given to all members of the Board of Management of the school and it should be retained for future reference.

**This circular may also be accessed on the Department of Education & Science website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)**

Dermot Ryan,  
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