St Michael’s PS,

49, Lisnaragh Rd

Dunnamanagh, Strabane

Co Tyrone BT82 0QN

17th December 2021

Dear Parent,

The application process for post-primary school will begin in January. Parents of P7 children can access information and advice about choosing a post-primary school on the Department of Education website.

Here is a summary of the Key dates in the process:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key Date** | **Step in Process** |
| **January** | Parents of P6/7 children can access information and advice on the Department of Education website about the transfer procedure, including how to go about  choosing a post-primary school using the link below:  advice-for-parents-of-children-in-primary-six  (education-ni.gov.uk) |
| **January/**  **February** | Parents may request prospectuses and take part in virtual/ open days/nights with schools they are considering for their child.  The Education Authority publishes information on the post-primary transfer procedure, including each post-primary school’s admissions criteria, on its website.  Primary school principals issue parents of P7 children information from the Education Authority about the  transfer process and submitting an online Transfer Application including the deadline for doing so.  Parents decide which schools they would like their child to be considered for in order of preference. |
| **February/**  **March** | Applications are made available to those schools listed as first preferences. |
| **February**  **to May** | Applications are considered by post-primary schools and where a school is **not** oversubscribed it must admit all applicants. If over-subscribed with applications it selects pupils using its admissions criteria. Schools are  not allowed to use any information other than that relevant to their published admissions criteria in deciding which pupils to admit.  The Transfer Applications of those pupils not selected are passed to their second preference schools and the same process is applied. This is repeated until as many  pupils as possible are placed.  Where a pupil is not selected by any of the schools they have listed as preferences, his/her parents will need to liaise with the Education Authority to find a school with places available after the placement notifications have been issued. The Education Authority will not seek further preferences from parents prior to the date when placement notification issues. |
| **May** | Placement notification advising parents which post-primary school their child has been admitted to. |
| **Within 10**  **days of**  **notification**  **of the**  **outcome of**  **applications** | Parents who consider that a school did not apply its admissions criteria when selecting pupils, or applied the criteria incorrectly, have a right to appeal to an  independent Appeal Tribunal established by the Education Authority.  **Ten days after the notification of the outcome of**  **applications** is the date by which parents must submit appeal forms to the Education Authority against post-primary schools’ admissions decisions. |
| **Any point in**  **the year** | Parents are also advised in the placement notification of their right to submit an application to the independent  Exceptional Circumstances Body if they consider there are compelling reasons why their child must attend a  particular post-primary school.  There is no equivalent closing date for applications to the Exceptional Circumstances Body as this Body considers cases that relate to Year 8-12 admissions at any point  in the year. |

**Further DE information:**

Parents have a key role to play in the transfer process as it is their responsibility to:

* Complete a Transfer Application for each child transferring to post-primary school.
* State their preference for the schools where they would like their children to

be considered for admission. Parents should be made aware that they have

the right to state their preference of school, but that if the school is oversubscribed

then their child may not be admitted; and

* Ensure that **all the relevant information** (relating to the admissions criteria

of all the schools they have listed, for example, whether their child is the

eldest or only child or first boy/girl to transfer, and whether siblings attend) is

correct and is provided when they complete the Transfer Application to

enable schools to consider their child’s application properly. Parents should

be made aware of the importance of ensuring that information provided on

the Transfer Application is accurate, especially personal details including their

address and that it is the child’s normal place of residence. Also, parents

should understand that, where relevant to an admissions decision,

declarations of FSME registration will be checked by the Education Authority

and other important qualifying information, such as address details and

‘eldest child’ will be checked by over-subscribed post-primary schools in

accordance with the Department’s Duty to Verify Guidance.

Parents should be advised that there will be no limit to the number of preferred

schools which a parent may list on the Transfer Application and that **at least four**

should be selected including at least one non-grammar school. Failure to

express sufficient preferences risks a child being left without a school placement

at the end of the procedure, resulting in a limited offer of schools with places still

remaining.

Parents should be encouraged to think carefully about the preferences they

express for their child’s post-primary school, taking into account the following:

* The admissions criteria of schools - whether the schools are traditionally

oversubscribed and therefore likely to apply their admissions criteria, and if

so, to what extent the child meets these criteria;

• The child’s own views on where he/she would be happiest;

• The child’s aptitudes and the school(s) and provision to which they would best

be suited;

• The impression of schools gained from a range of sources e.g. from visits to

the schools, reading school prospectuses, talking to other parents etc;

• The arrangements schools make for pupils who may require additional help;

• The arrangements schools make to provide support for pupils who are not

able to keep up with their class in specific subjects;

• The information that will be published in schools’ prospectuses;

• School fees (if relevant) and other additional costs (e.g. are pupils required to

participate in certain activities such as particular sports, which also have costs

associated with kit etc.);

• Transport entitlement; and

• Travelling time and travel arrangements.

In relation to schools that use first a criterion giving a degree of priority to children who are listed on the Education Authority register as entitled to free school meals (FSME), it should be explained in particular:

• That if a school adopts the FSME criterion in the form recommended by DE

this will not mean automatic entry into a school for all FSME registered

applicants, but they will be given a degree of priority to ensure that the

proportion of such pupils admitted reflects the proportion of first preference

applicants to that school who are FSME registered;

• **That it will be very important therefore that parents register their child’s**

**entitlement to FSM with the Education Authority as soon as possible** so

that they are in a position to record this registered entitlement on the Transfer

Application;

• Parents should also be made aware that declarations of entitlement recorded

on Transfer Applications will be checked with the Education Authority if relevant to an admissions decision.

In general, the importance of the information published online by the Education

Authority should be stressed to parents. In particular, parents should understand that the Education Authority’s online directory will tell them the admissions criteria that schools will use to select children if they are oversubscribed. These criteria will help parents understand the importance of the information that they will be responsible for providing when completing their child’s Transfer

Application.

If parents are unable to access the information published online, they should be advised the Education Authority will also provide parents with a hard copy of a school’s admissions criteria on request. Alternatively, parents may approach a school directly for this information. The Education Authority will also provide parents with a hard copy Transfer Application form in the event that they are unable to submit an online form.

**Sources of information:**

• The Department of Education’s information leaflet for parents of children due

to transfer. This helps parents get ready for their child’s move to post-primary

school and can be found on the Department of Education website at:

advice-for-parents-of-children-in-primary-six (education-ni.gov.uk)

• Information published online by the Education Authority (www.eani.org.uk),

including a searchable directory containing the admissions criteria of all post primary

schools. A guidance leaflet setting out the transfer procedure, which

will direct parents to this information on the Education Authority website, will

be shared with parents via their child’s primary school. This leaflet can be

accessed at: P7 Transfer Leaflet Feb 2021.pdf (eani.org.uk)