



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

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CIRCULAR 3 OF 2024

TO : DEPUTY – DIRECTOR GENERAL
CLUSTER CHIEF DIRECTORS
CHIEF DIRECTORS
HEAD OFFICE DIRECTORS
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC ORDINARY SCHOOLS
CHAIRPERSONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES
SGB ASSOCIATIONS

FROM : HEAD OF DEPARTMENT -EDUCATION

DATE : 04 APRIL 2024

SUBJECT : LEARNER ADMISSIONS CIRCULAR FOR 2025 YEAR OF SCHOOLING

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Circular is to outline processes to be followed in all public ordinary schools on the administration of learner admissions during the academic year 2024 in preparation for January 2025. These processes must be in line with the following prescripts, inter alia.

- 1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996
- 1.2 The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) as amended.
- 1.3 National Education Policy Act, 1996, Act No.27 of 1996 published in Government Gazette No 19377, Notice 2432 of 1998
- 1.4 Circular 1 of 2020 – Department of Basic Education
- 1.5 Any other applicable provincial law

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Registration and admission of learners has become one of the biggest challenges in the sector/ Department of Education. The common problem, thus far, is the fact that the English Medium schools are currently faced with the problem of absorbing all applicants, and the informal settlement schools are over-populated whilst schools in the old settlements become underpopulated. Demands for admission at well-resourced schools remain a challenge in the sector/Department of Education.
- 2.2 Also, people movement makes learner admissions not a seasonal activity but an activity that takes place throughout the year.
- 2.3 It is further noted that, school principals continue to admit learners that are more than the figures declared in the Post Provisioning Norms (PPN) distribution and that creates problems when it comes to allocation of learning areas/subjects. The school must make a written request to the Head of Department if there are valid reasons forcing them to admit more learners on top of the enrolment that has been used to calculate PPN via District Director for recommendation. No growth post will be considered for any school that has not been granted official approval to increase learner numbers after receiving the official staff establishment.
- 2.4 There are schools that have exceeded learner enrolment, the maximum number of 930 for a large Primary School and 1000 in the case of Secondary School.
- 2.5 The above-mentioned scenario is further complicated by several small schools that are offering diverse curriculum streams with limited human resources and thereby compromising quality teaching and learning.
- 2.6 It is the responsibility of Head of Department to administer admission of learners in all public ordinary schools and further approve curriculum streams to be offered, however all principals of schools are legally delegated to perform this function as proxy of the Head of Department.

- 2.7 The principals of public schools must ensure that, all eligible learners especially those of compulsory school going age access admission without any unfair discrimination.
- 2.8 School principals and their School Governing Bodies (SGBs) should ensure that learner admissions are conducted according to age qualification. Documents required are certified copy(ies) of Identity document, birth certificate, permit, Proof of Immunization card, School report and School transfer letter as per National Guidelines on Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools. Therefore, any other documentation required by schools for admission of learners outside the National Guidelines is not legitimate and should not be used to prevent learners from admission.
- 2.9 According to Circular 1 of 2020 (DBE), the Head of Department is directed to admit all children not in possession of an official birth certificate into public schools in the Eastern Cape Province and where a learner cannot provide an official birth certificate, the principal of the relevant school is directed to accept alternative proof of identity such as an affidavit or a sworn statement deposed to by the parent, care giver or guardian of the learner wherein the learner is fully identified.
- 2.10 It further states that the Head of Department is restrained from, in any manner, whatsoever, removing or excluding from schools, children, including illegal foreign children, already admitted, purely by reason of the fact that the children have no identity document number, permit or passport, or have not produced any identification documents.

3. LEGISLATION RELATING TO ADMISSION AND PLACEMENT OF LEARNERS IN SCHOOLS.

- 3.1 According to section 5(7) of SASA, admission of learners to a public school must be made to the education department in a manner determined by the Head of Department.
- 3.1.1 The HOD is responsible for the administration of the admission of learners to a public school.

- 3.1.2 The Head of Department may delegate the responsibility to a school and to officials of the department (NEPA) and make a copy available to the Head of Department.
- 3.1.3 A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way [SASA 5(1).
- 3.1.4 No learners may be refused admission to a public school on the grounds that his or her parent [SASA 5(3)] -
- (a) Is unable to pay or has not paid the school fees determined by the governing body (Under section 39).
 - (b) Does not subscribe to the mission statement of the school.
 - (c) Has refused to enter into a contract in terms of which the parent waives any claim for damages arising out of the education of the learner.
- 3.1.5 [SASA 39(5)] No public school may charge any registration, administration, or other fee, except school fees as defined in Section 39(1).

4. DELIBERATIONS

- 4.1 A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way,
- 4.2 The principal of a public school represents the Head of Department (HOD), it is the Head of Department who has the prerogative to accept or decline requests on admission of learners. Hence, he/she will be expected to give update to the district director, periodically or when requested to do so, on all matters related to this delegated function.
- 4.3 School Governing Bodies of public schools must determine the school admission policy in compliance with the legislation. Copies of the school admission policies must be submitted to District Electoral Committees.
- 4.4 The school must establish learner admission committees to administer learner admissions properly and liaise with the District Learner Admission committee (DLAC).
- 4.5 ALL APPLICATIONS of learners MUST be captured on SASAMS with their Identity Numbers clearly reflected taking note of Circular 1 of 2020 (DBE).

- 4.6 The schools must observe and comply with admission requirements and Management Plan as it has impact to resourcing aspects of the department.
- 4.7 Schools wishing to deviate from the contents of this circular should do that by submitting written correspondence to the Head of Department after consulting their District Directors for recommendation.
- 4.8 All schools must declare their capacity per class, to the District Learner Admissions Committee.

5. ADMISSION PERIOD

- 5.1 The admission period shall be from 08 April to 31 October 2024
- 5.2 The issuing out of application forms shall commence on 08 April 2024 and closes on 28 June 2024.
- 5.3 District must place all learners not admitted at schools by 31 October 2024
- 5.4 ONLY the exceptional or special cases such as relocations and work transfer of parents that will be prioritised during and after the admission period.

6. ADMISSION AGE OF A LEARNER IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL

- 6.1 4 years turning 5 by 30 June in the year of admission for Grade R
- 6.2 5 years turning 6 by 30 June in the year of admission for Grade 1
- 6.3 Admission committees should take note of section 5(4b-d) of SASA for admission of underage learners.

7. DISTRICT LEARNER ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

- 7.1 Each district will establish a District Learner Admissions Committee to effectively, manage queries / appeals related to learner admissions in the district throughout the year.
- 7.2 The main objective for establishing such a committee is to assist the District Director in ensuring that admissions are finalized within the prescribed time frames in each district so that teaching and learning is utilized optimally from the first day of school in the academic year.
- 7.3 The District Learner Admissions Committee will be chaired by the District

Director or a District delegated official. Members of this committee will include:

- SGB Coordinator
- Circuit Manager/s
- Circuit Management Centre Heads
- Customer Care Officials
- SASAMS Co-ordinator
- District infrastructure official

7.4 Functions of the committee will include, inter alia the following:

- (a) To handle all learner admission queries referred to the district from schools, community, provincial and national offices throughout the year.
- (b) To give timeous feedback to applicants regarding their admission queries appeals and disputes.
- (c) To compile a district report on how each query was resolved.
- (d) To maintain a database of queries and escalated admission cases for each year of application.
- (e) To identify trends related to learner admission queries and implement intervention strategies.
- (f) To manage possible emerging learner enrolment influx and resources appropriately.
- (g) To liaise with Circuit Managers, school principals and SGBs on matters pertaining to learner admissions.

7.5 School Governing Body

- a) The admission policy of a public school is determined by the governing body of the school in terms of section 5(5) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
- b) The admission policy must be used by school admission committees to admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way.
- c) The governing body of a public school must make the copy of the school's admission policy available to the Head of Department.

- d) The governing body of a public school may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to a public school, or direct or authorise the principal or any other person to administer such test.

7.6. School Admission Committee

- a) The decision to admit or not admit the learner must be made only by the school admission Committee.
- b) Minutes of the admission committee and their admission criteria must be made available when needed to resolve admission disputes
- c) The school admission committee must communicate application feedback to all applicants.
- d) The school admission committee must submit the admission data to the district

8. PLACEMENT CRITERIA

In placing the unplaced learners, the district learner admission committee must use the following criteria:

- a) The applicant learner's place of residence is the immediate school community
- b) The applicant learner has a sibling attending the school – Sibling's Previous School
- c) The place of employment of at least one of the applicant learner's parents is within the immediate school community.
- d) The applicant learner's place of residence is within a 30 km radius of the school- *Home address Within 30 kms of the school (verified proof of address).*
- e) The applicant learner's place of residence is beyond a 30 km radius of the school – *Home address Beyond 30 kms from the school.*
- f) Learner applications dealt with on a first come first serve basis.

9. ONLINE LEARNER ADMISSIONS SYSTEM

- (a) Heads of Education Departments Committee resolved in its meeting of the 15 August 2017 that all Provincial Education Departments must consider implementing online learner admissions system.
- (b) The Eastern Cape Department of Education has decided to pilot online learner admissions system for Grade R,1 and 8, in Buffalo City Metropolitan, Chris Hani East and Nelson Mandela Bay Districts.

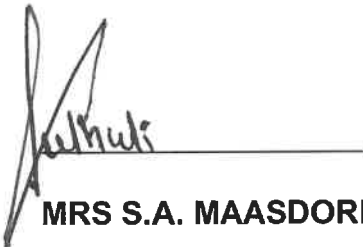
- (c) Schools from the three districts will receive applications for placement OF Grade R, 1 and 8, and capture them on SASSAMS.
- (d) The Online Learner Admissions System will go live in July 2024 for capturing of applications and placement of learners in the three districts.

Attached hereto, as Annexure A is a Management Plan for learner admissions to be implemented by all schools and districts in the 2024 school year for 2025 schooling.

10. CONCLUSION

This circular applies with immediate effect and rescinds all other previous circulars related to learner admissions. You must further note that the Head of Department has a right to implement consequence management to an individual or structure that is violating the contents of this circular, using relevant legislation.

Your co-operation in this matter will be highly appreciated.



MRS S.A. MAASDORP
A/HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

08/04/2024

DATE

ANNEXURE A

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LEARNER ADMISSIONS IN 2024 FOR 2025

No	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
1.	Re-enrolment of learners		
1.1	Currently enrolled learners are re-registered	School principal	08 – 30 April 2024
2.	Registration process		
2.1	Issuing out of application forms to parents	School principal	08 April - 08 June 2024
2.2	Capturing of applications in SASAMS	School principal	08 April – 28 June 2024
2.3	Return of application forms	Parents	08 April – 09 July 2024
3.	Placement of learners by the school		
3.1	Placements of learners and inform parents of success and unsuccessful application in writing (except online learner admissions)	School principal	15 July - 30 August 2024
3.	Report on number applied, placed and unplaced learners	School principal	16 -30 August 2024
3.1	Parents accept or reject placement offers in writing	Parent	05 - 30 August 2024
4.	Placement of learners by districts		
4.1	Placement of unplaced learners who applied within the application period, in schools with available space (Except online placement)	Districts	02- 30 September 2024
4. 2	Districts submit weekly reports to Head Office with minutes of DLAC attached	District Directors	01- 31 October 2024
4. 3	District Director manages the placement of late registration and submit to Head office (Except for Online Admissions)	Districts	04 - 29 November 2024