

# Claiming Special Provisions

## - A Guide for Parents & Guardians \*

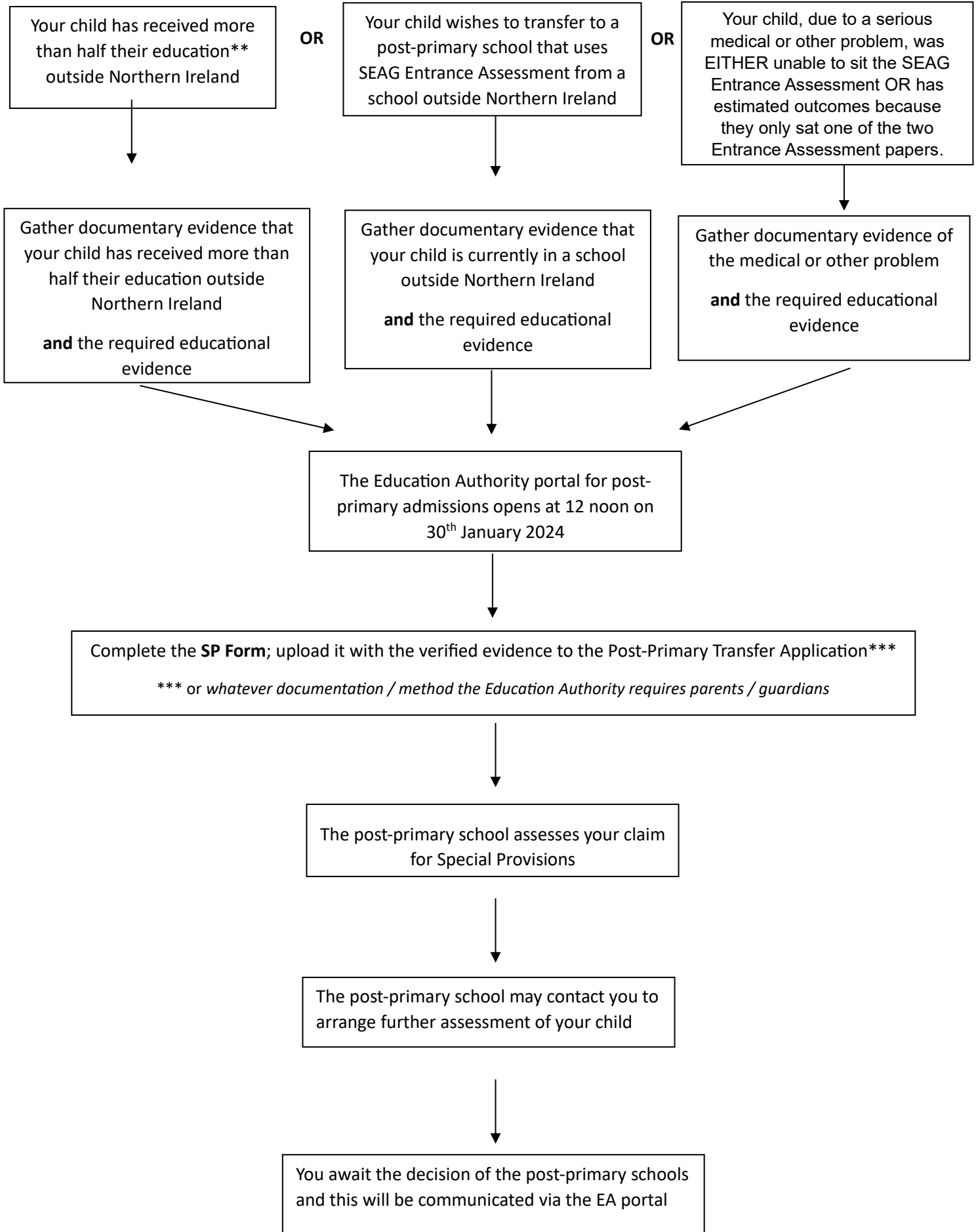
**\*Parents & Guardians of children who wish to transfer to post-primary school in September 2024**

*Please note that decisions regarding the admission of any child to any individual school are made by the Board of Governors of that school.*

*Parents and guardians are advised to carefully read the published Admissions Criteria of each school for which they intend to apply for a place for their child, particularly those sections which provide information on the school's procedures for application of Special Provisions.*

*Individual schools can apply different methods of assessment. You may also contact the schools directly for information about Special Provisions.*

# Claiming Special Provisions



## Special Provisions

### What are Special Provisions?

A candidate may request Special Provisions, where the candidate:

- i. has received more than half of their education\*\* outside Northern Ireland; or  
*\*\*based on the time from the start of Primary 1 (1<sup>st</sup> September 2017) to the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 i.e. more than 3 years and 3 months.*
- ii. wishes to transfer to a post-primary school that uses the SEAG Entrance Assessment from a school outside Northern Ireland; or
- iii. due to serious medical or other problems which are supported by appropriate documentary evidence or for a demonstrably valid reason also supported by appropriate documentary evidence, was EITHER unable to sit the SEAG Entrance Assessment OR has an estimated outcome because they only sat one of the two Entrance Assessment papers.

### Making a claim for Special Provisions

#### What should I do?

If you are making a claim for Special Provisions on the grounds that your child fulfils **criteria (i)** above, you should obtain a letter on school headed notepaper from your child's current primary school signed by the school Principal which shows the total dates of your child's education within Northern Ireland. This information is available to the primary school Principal through the SIMS School History section.

If you are making a claim for Special Provisions on the grounds that your child fulfils **criteria (ii)** above, you should obtain a letter on school headed notepaper from your child's current primary school signed by the school Principal confirms your child's home address outside Northern Ireland.

If you are making a claim for Special Provisions on the grounds that your child fulfils **criteria (iii)** above, you should provide a letter from your child's GP or Medical Consultant or another appropriate professional indicating the nature of the serious medical problems or reason for the absence and/or how it prevented your child from sitting the SEAG Entrance Assessment or from taking either Paper 1 or Paper 2.

If you have any other educational or other evidence which you wish to have considered with your application for Special Provisions, you should obtain this evidence in the form of age standardised test scores in English and Mathematics or other standardised tests that have been authenticated by the school Principal of your child's current school.

If you decide to proceed with your claim for Special Provisions and you are making an application to one or more of the schools which use the SEAG Entrance Assessment outcomes, then you should complete an SP form and upload details of your claim and the supporting evidence to the Education Authority (EA), through completion of the Post-Primary Transfer Application. The Education Authority will then forward your Application to the school you have chosen as first preference for your child\*\*\*.

Boards of Governors or their delegated sub-committees have a duty to examine all of the claims for Special Provisions alongside the educational or other evidence and will assess the child's application for a place. Individual schools may use slightly different wording for the criteria for eligibility for Special Provisions. You will need to check the wordings for the schools you are making application and ensure that you take account of these when completing your SP form.

Each school which receives your claim for Special Provisions will make its own independent adjudication on your claim.

## **Gathering the evidence for a claim for Special Provisions which, along with the completed SP form, will form part of the Post-Primary Transfer Application\*\*\*.**

### **What evidence will I need to gather in support of my claim\*\*\*?**

#### For claims under criterion (i) above:

You should obtain a letter on school headed notepaper from your child's current primary school signed by the school Principal which shows the total dates of your child's education within Northern Ireland. This information is available to the primary school Principal through the SIMS School History section.

#### For claims under criterion (ii) above:

You should obtain a letter on school headed notepaper from your child's current primary school signed by the school Principal confirms your child's home address outside Northern Ireland.

If due to your particular circumstances, you are unable to provide documentation from former school(s) you MUST explain why it is that that documentation cannot be provided. It is anticipated that this will only arise in respect of those children who have recently arrived in Northern Ireland from countries where conflict or political unrest make the provision of documentation difficult or impossible. Schools in Northern Ireland still have a legal duty to verify the basis of your application and are legally obliged to make reasonable requests to do so.

#### For claims under criterion (iii) above:

You should provide a letter from your child's GP or Medical Consultant or another appropriate professional indicating the nature of the serious medical problems or reason for the absence and/or how it prevented your child from sitting the SEAG Entrance Assessment or from taking either Paper 1 or Paper 2.

### **Claims for Special Provisions will usually also include verifiable educational evidence.**

The following are examples of the type of educational evidence considered appropriate:

- i. your child's performance in English (or Irish in Irish-medium schools) and Mathematics in standardised tests.
- ii. your child's relative performance in English (or Irish in Irish-medium schools) and Mathematics in relation to other pupils in his/her class. This could take the form of results in internal school tests, transfer practice papers and standardised tests from the beginning of KS2 compared to the results for the same tests of all other unnamed members of the P7 class.

If the school decides that further assessment of educational evidence is required, the school will arrange an agreed date for this assessment. The assessment will be administered by a suitably qualified person and you will receive a report on your child's assessment outcomes. Please note, that this report may be shared with other schools listed on the post-primary transfer application form.

***You should provide all results and other information in the detail and format requested within the admissions criteria of the particular schools which you have nominated in your Post-Primary Transfer Application\*\*\*.***

**If you need further assistance on Claiming Special Provisions you may wish to contact the school(s) to which you intend to apply for a place for your child.**

**The Department of Education has placed the responsibility on post-primary schools for verifying all evidence used in the admissions process.**

**Before you submit the Post-Primary Transfer Application, you should ensure that:**

- the completed SP form and all of your documentary evidence is securely uploaded with the Application\*\*.

You are advised to retain a copy of the SP Form and the documentary evidence you uploaded with the **Post-Primary Transfer Application**\*\*\*. When you are satisfied that the Application is completed and all of your information is recorded and uploaded, you should submit it to the Education Authority\*\*.

**How do I upload documentary evidence to support the claim for Special Provisions?**

- The SP Form from the school website should be completed, clearly labelled, and uploaded as a single document;
- Supporting evidence should be uploaded either as Word or PDF documents; other formats (such as photographs) are not acceptable;
- Supporting documents should be scanned and, where possible, uploaded as a single file;
- Documents should be clearly labelled. Document names should include the type of document, relevant dates (where applicable), and applicant's initials (e.g., medical\_evidence\_14.11.23\_AR).

**What will happen to my claim?**

The Education Authority Post-Primary Admissions Team will process all of the **Post-Primary Transfer Applications**\*\* to be accessed by the first choice post-primary schools.

Each school which receives your claim for Special Provisions will make its own independent adjudication on your claim.

**\*\*\*Please note that the Post-Primary Transfer Application process is carried out by the Education Authority. and the process for 2024 had not been finalised by the Education Authority (EA) at the time of publication of this "2024 Claiming Special Provisions" Guide (25<sup>th</sup> November 2023). Parents/guardians must rely on documentation provided by the EA and not the outline guidance provided in this document, when making their Post-Primary Transfer Applications in 2024.**

## Appendix A Post-Primary Schools Using Common Documentation for Special Cases

*N.B. If an academically selective post- primary school does not appear on the list below, it means that they will be using their own documentation which will be accessible from the individual school's website.*

Abbey Christian Brothers Grammar School (Newry)	Methodist College Belfast
Antrim Grammar School	Mount Lourdes Grammar School (Enniskillen)
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School (Belfast)	Omagh Academy Grammar School
Assumption Grammar School (Ballynahinch)	Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock (Belfast)
Ballyclare High School	Our Lady's Grammar School (Newry)
Ballymena Academy	Rainey Endowed School (Magherafelt)
Banbridge Academy	Rathmore Grammar School (Belfast)
Bangor Grammar School	Regent House School (Newtownards)
Belfast High School	Royal School Armagh
Belfast Royal Academy	Sacred Heart Grammar School (Newry)
Bloomfield Collegiate (Belfast)	Slemish College* (Ballymena)
Cambridge House Grammar School (Ballymena)	St Colman's College (Newry)
Campbell College (Belfast)	St Columb's College (Derry)
Carrickfergus Grammar School	St Dominic's High School (Belfast)
Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh*	St Joseph's Grammar School, Donaghmore <sup>^</sup>
Coleraine Grammar School	St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena
Dalriada School (Ballymoney)	St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel*
Dominican College, Fortwilliam (Belfast)	St Malachy's College Belfast
Down High School (Downpatrick)	St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School (Belfast)
Enniskillen Royal Grammar School	St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt
Foyle College (Londonderry)	St Michael's College (Enniskillen)
Friends' School Lisburn	St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon
Glenlola Collegiate (Bangor)	Strabane Academy*
Grosvenor Grammar School (Belfast)	Strangford Integrated College* (Carrowdore)
Hunterhouse College (Belfast)	Strathearn School (Belfast)
Lagan College* (Belfast)	Sullivan Upper School (Holywood)
Larne Grammar School	Thornhill College (Derry)
Lecale Trinity Grammar School** (Downpatrick)	Victoria College (Belfast)
Limavady Grammar School	Wallace High School (Lisburn)
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh*	Wellington College (Belfast)
Lumen Christi College (Derry)	

\*= schools which use academic selection for only part of their total intake

†= new school, opening in Sept 2024, which uses academic selection for only part of its total intake (from amalgamation of 3 schools including St Patrick's Grammar School, Downpatrick)

<sup>^</sup>= a school with a Main School which is academically selective and an Irish Medium Stream which is not Claiming Special Provisions – A Guide for Parents & Guardians