



Please note that this invitation letter and any conditions stipulated in it form part of the overall patronage process.

Re: Invitation to apply for patronage in the establishment of new post-primary schools due to open in September 2017-2018

April 2016

Dear patron/prospective patron,

As you may be aware, on 17 November 2015 the Minister for Education & Skills, Jan O’Sullivan, T.D., announced the establishment of six new post-primary schools in 2017 and three new post-primary schools in 2018. Each of these schools is being established to meet the need to provide school places for the increased number of children living within the particular areas to be served by each school.

The patronage for the nine schools due to open in September 2017 & 2018 needs to be decided. I am writing to you in this context.

Details of the school planning areas in which the nine schools will be located are as follows:

County	School Planning areas to be served	Long-term projected enrolment	Year of Opening
Dublin	Carpenterstown and Castleknock Dublin 15*	1,000	2017
Limerick	Limerick City & environs (South-West)	600	2017
Dublin	Lucan, Co Dublin	1,000	2017
Dublin	Malahide and Portmarnock, Co Dublin*	1,000	2017
Laois	Portlaoise, Co Laois	1,000	2017
Dublin	Swords, Co Dublin	1,000	2017
Limerick	Limerick City & environs (East)	600	2018
Dublin	Dublin South City Centre*	1,000	2018
Dublin	Firhouse, Dublin 24	1,000	2018

* School to serve these combined school planning areas

To advance the patronage process for these nine schools, an information meeting will be held in the Tullamore Office of the Department of Education and Skills on **4th May 2016 at 11am**

for patrons and prospective patrons in relation to the areas where the new schools are required and to discuss the mandatory requirements/criteria and procedures for deciding on the patronage of these new schools. I would appreciate if you could reply by **2nd May 2016** to indicate your availability to attend this meeting, or nominate a representative. Please contact **elisa_goode@education.gov.ie** or phone **057 932 4433** in this regard.

Following that meeting it will be open to you to apply, if you wish to do so, to become patron in any or all of the areas outlined above. The deadline for receipt of applications (including lists of parental preferences from the area to be served) for patronage of these new schools is **5pm on Wednesday 8th June 2016**. Applications should be emailed to **Elisa Goode at elisa_goode@education.gov.ie**

In making your application you must clearly state the ethos, gender and medium of instruction of the school which you propose to establish.

Each of the nine schools is being established to meet a projected demographic need to cater for children living within the school planning area(s) to be served by the school who are due to commence their post-primary education from 2017 (or 2018) onwards. A map of the relevant area(s) for each new school is published on the Department's website. A link to a document containing the maps is as follows: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Establishing-a-New-School/New-Post-Primary-Schools/2017-2018/Maps-list.pdf>

Please find attached, for information, a copy of the document "Arrangements for patronage in the establishment of new post-primary schools due to open in September 2017 and September 2018" which applies to deciding patronage of new schools. This document also contains general information for applicants who are not already a patron of an existing school in regard to the conditions/requirements which must be satisfied in advance of any application under the patronage process. Please note that meeting the patronage commitments and requirements in this document does not confer any automatic right to become a patron of a new school.

In making your application you must confirm a clear and explicit acceptance of each of the requirements and criteria as published and you must provide evidence of parental demand from parents of children living in the area(s) to be served, for the school type proposed by you.

A standard template for submission of parental demand has been devised and is available on the Department's website at Links: [schools opening in 2017](#) [schools opening 2018](#) and schools opening in 2018. All information must be presented in this format only and returned by email to the Department, accompanied by a signed [declaration form](#). You must also include an Eircode for all addresses.

Please also find attached the mandatory Code of Conduct for patron/prospective patron bodies relating to canvassing parents for their particular preferred model of patronage. A breach of same will render the patron/prospective patron's application invalid and will result

in elimination from the current patronage process. Please note that the code contains maximum expenditure limits.

It is the applicant's sole responsibility to ensure that they read in its entirety and understand all of the information provided and that their application is complete and is in compliance with the mandatory requirements and criteria as published.

Please note that in making your application, failure to confirm compliance with/acceptance of each of the requirements and criteria as published and set out in the attached document "Arrangements for patronage in the establishment of new post-primary schools due to open in September 2017 and September 2018" will result in an application being deemed invalid and invalid applications will not be assessed further as part of the process. To assist you in ensuring that your application is fully complete, please find an applicant checklist attached to this letter.

The Department will not commence the assessment process until after the closing date for receipt of applications and further contact cannot be made with applicants regarding the substance of their application after the closing date.

If you should have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Carney
Assistant Principal Officer
Tel: 0761 108613
Email: mary_carney@education.gov.ie

Enclosures:

- Enclosure 1: Arrangements for patronage in the establishment of new post-primary schools due to open in September 2017 and September 2018
- Enclosure 2: Code of conduct
- Enclosure 3: Applicant checklist

Enclosure 1
**ARRANGEMENTS FOR PATRONAGE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW POST-PRIMARY
SCHOOLS DUE TO OPEN IN SEPTEMBER 2017 & SEPTEMBER 2018**

NEED FOR NEW SCHOOL

The following essential conditions apply to the establishment and approval of a new post-primary school to meet demographic need:

- The demographics of the area must support the need for the establishment of a new school - a new school would not impact negatively on the enrolment of schools in the catchment, other than perhaps the establishment of an all-Irish school and the impact of this on an existing Aonad.
- If the demographics require the establishment of a school, then the process for the selection of the type of school should allow for different patrons/bodies to be considered as the patron of a new school.

NEW SCHOOL PROCESS

The process will involve the following steps for a new post-primary school:

- Identification of locations of new schools and sizes of new schools by the Department. Most new second-level schools must have a student enrolment capacity of 800 – 1,000 students. A lower threshold of 400 students may apply to Gaelcoláistí, having regard to the alternative of establishing an Aonad within a school.
- Written applications from prospective patrons addressing all of the criteria.
- Consideration of the applications by Department officials and report drafted for consideration by the New Schools Establishment Group.
- Consideration by Group of report and endorsement by Group or identification of need for further analysis by Department and subsequent consideration by Group.
- Report from the Group submitted to the Minister for consideration.
- Decision by the Minister.

CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN THE PATRONAGE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The main criterion for the decision on patronage in an area where there is already at least one second-level school will be the following:

- Whether the establishment of the proposed school model would result in greater diversity and plurality of second-level school patronage and provision in the area (having regard to neighbouring areas) where there is demand for such diversity and plurality. In this context individual patron bodies from the one faith group will be regarded as representing the same school patronage type for assessing plurality.

As part of the examination of this criterion regard would be had for:

- Whether there is a school of the same or similar patronage in the same catchment area (having regard to neighbouring areas) and whether there is additional demand for such patronage
- The extent to which the establishment of the school would result in greater diversity and plurality of patronage in the area (having regard to neighbouring areas) where there is demand for such plurality and diversity
- Effectiveness of mechanisms planned to ensure that the proposed school will expand to the size range of 800 to 1,000 pupils, including
 - planned possible measures if expansion is not happening as fast as planned
 - Planned collaboration with existing second-level schools in the catchment area.

Where an area is to be served by a single new school, the key criteria will be the following:

- Whether the school can cater for the needs and requirements of all of the pupils in the area.
- Having regard to neighbouring areas, whether the establishment of the proposed school model would result in greater diversity and plurality of second-level school patronage and provision where there is demand for such diversity and plurality. In this context individual patron bodies from the one faith group will be regarded as representing the same school patronage type for assessing plurality.

As part of the examination of these criteria regard would be had for:

- The effectiveness of the manner in which the patron proposes to determine the requirements of all pupils / groups of pupils regarding pupils of a particular faith; pupils of no faith
- The extent to which these requirements are to be met
- Effectiveness of the manner in which a comprehensive and broad curriculum is proposed to be offered during the start-up phase
- Effectiveness of the manner in which a comprehensive and broad curriculum is proposed to be offered when the school is past the start-up phase
- Effectiveness of the manner to which a comprehensive and broad curriculum is proposed to be offered to all students, e.g., supporting gender integration into all subjects
- The extent of demand in the area for the applicant patrons
- Having regard to neighbouring areas, whether the establishment of the proposed school model would result in greater diversity and plurality of second-level school patronage and provision where there is demand for such diversity and plurality

Most new school provision will be co-educational in nature and patronage decisions will be made on that basis. There may be a small number of instances where single-gender provision will need to be made if there is an identified imbalance between the capacities of

single-gender schools. Any such identification would be made in advance of seeking applications from patrons.

PARENTAL PREFERENCES

Patron bodies proposing schools will be asked to provide evidence of parental demand. Patrons will be asked to sign up lists of parents of children who will be due to commence their second-level education in the years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022 and who indicate interest in having their children educated in their new school. These lists are to include the child's name, date of birth, address and their year of proposed entry to school in addition to a preference for the medium of instruction. A template for submission of parental demand will be provided for this purpose. All information must be presented in this format only and must be confirmed by the applicant.

PATRONAGE COMMITMENTS

Agreement to each of the following requirements must be specifically confirmed in writing by prospective school patrons:

- That the prospective patron is willing to operate by the rules and regulations laid down in various Department of Education and Skills circulars and operating procedures and to follow the prescribed curriculum;
- That the prospective patron is willing to operate the school within the resourcing and policy parameters established by the Department of Education and Skills.
- That the prospective patron is willing to enrol children in the area(s) for which the Department has identified the need for a school
- That the prospective patron is willing to accept and open special education facilities;
- That the prospective patron is willing to expand/operate the school in the size range of 800 to 1,000 pupils;
- That the prospective patron is willing to establish an Aonad where there is a demand for it (for a school where the primary medium of instruction is to be English)
- That the prospective patron is willing to enter into the appropriate standard lease agreement with the Department of Education and Skills.
- That the prospective patron is willing to share school buildings with other schools as may be determined by the Department should the school building not be in full use
- That the prospective patron is willing to be part of a campus development with other primary or second-level schools as identified by the Department;

Please note that failure to comply with the foregoing patronage commitments will result in an application being deemed invalid and invalid applications will not be assessed further as part of the process.

An applicant who is not already an existing school patron will need to ensure they have put certain requirements in place in advance of making an application for patronage under the new school process. In this regard, the APPENDIX attached outlines general information for prospective patrons on the requirements to be put in place.

Department of Education and Skills
April 2016

APPENDIX

General information for prospective patrons

PATRONAGE RESPONSIBILITY

A school patron has significant responsibilities which relate to the whole school community comprising teachers, students, parents and the wider community served by the school. A prospective school patron therefore needs to be able to demonstrate sufficient structure, continuity and reliability to conduct the responsible functions of a patron:

PATRONAGE FUNCTIONS

- Appointment of the school's board of management
- Suspension, if necessary, of the board of management
- Responsibility for the school's characteristic spirit, for which the board of management is accountable to the patron
- Ultimate responsibility/liability for industrial relations
- Responsibility for school property (and insurance)
- Financial matters – annual budgets and reports
- Decisions on school status such as extension, amalgamation, closure

STATUS OF PATRON BODY

A prospective patron needs to be able to demonstrate a capability to conduct the patron responsibilities in an ongoing way.

For an individual or group that is not a statutory body or otherwise formed with a constitution providing satisfactorily for succession and continuity, it would be considered necessary to establish a corporate entity, such as a company limited by guarantee. The patronage body should articulate its educational philosophy and educational objectives in a memorandum and articles of association, or other constitutional documentation. Three persons should be provided as directors or trustees. A patron body should be registered for charitable status with the Charities Regulatory Authority.

Meeting the requirements above does not confer any automatic right to become a patron of a new school.

EDUCATION ACT, 1998

The role of the school patron is referenced throughout the Education Act, 1998 and prospective patrons should ensure that they are familiar with all aspects of the Act, in particular, Parts 2 and 4 of the Act, which relate to schools and to boards of management respectively.

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/1998/a5198.pdf>

Disclaimer:

Please note that this information is not intended as a legal interpretation of the Education Act 1998. It is intended as general information only.

Enclosure 2

Code of Conduct

Patronage in the establishment of new post-primary schools due to open in September 2017 & 2018

Please note that this Code of Conduct is MANDATORY

In this code, the term “patrons” refers to existing registered school patrons and prospective new patrons.

- Patrons agree to provide factual information in respect of the underpinning ethos of schools under their patronage.
- In describing the ethos of schools under their patronage, patrons may identify agreed and well-understood distinguishing features of that ethos. No reference to, subjective statements about, direct commentary on, or description of, schools under other forms of patronage will be made.
- Patrons agree to maintain expenditure on promotional material within overall limits established for each identified area where the new schools are to be established in 2017 and 2018. A limit of €300.00 (incl of VAT) per patron will be maintained for expenditure in each area for which a new school is to be established. Where a group of organisations is engaged in a joint application or applications, the collective expenditure of the groups should not exceed €300.00 (incl of VAT) in an individual area.

Patrons agree to provide statements of expenditure for the purpose of satisfying these requirements. Patrons should be able to produce any necessary documentation, if requested to do so by Department officials, for the purposes of verification of expenditure incurred in connection with this application process. This could include for example relevant receipts, invoices and the corresponding transactions as they appear in the organisation’s accounting and payment systems and bank account.

- Patrons may seek to directly canvass parents to establish their patronage preference.
- The role of representatives of patrons should be to provide factual public information on their form of patronage. Contentious commentary, value statements or descriptions of schools under other forms of patronage will not be made.

- While the limitation of the influence of patrons is recognised, nevertheless, it is expected that patrons will encourage schools and other groups affiliated to them to abide by the spirit of this code of conduct.
- A breach of this Code of Conduct will render the patron's application invalid and will result in their elimination from the patronage process on this occasion.

- The process is as follows:
 - An alleged breach may be brought to the attention of the Department.
 - An alleged breach will be brought to the attention of the relevant patron by the Department.
 - The relevant patron will be given an opportunity to respond and remedy the situation as appropriate.
 - Any alleged breaches and responses will be dealt with in the relevant area assessment report.
 - The New Schools Establishment Group (NSEG) will consider the matter in the context of the report.

Department of Education and Skills
April 2016

Enclosure 3

**Checklist for applicants applying for patronage of new post-primary schools
to open in September 2017 and September 2018**

1. Is there a separate application for the area? Yes No
2. Each application must be accompanied by a number of documents, as follows:
- A. Has the application confirmed willingness to:
1. operate by the rules and regulations laid down in various Department of Education and Skills circulars and operating procedures and to follow the prescribed curriculum? Yes No
2. operate the school within the resourcing and policy parameters established by the Department of Education and Skills? Yes No
3. prioritise enrolment of children in the area(s) for which the Department has identified the need for a school? Yes No
4. accept and open special education facilities? Yes No
5. grow enrolment to the long-term projected enrolment identified by the Department ? Yes No
6. establish an Aonad where there is a demand for it (for a school where the primary medium of instruction is to be English) ? Yes No
7. enter into the appropriate standard lease agreement with the Department of Education and Skills ? Yes No
8. share school buildings with other schools as may be determined by the Department should the building not be in full use Yes No
9. be part of a campus development with other primary or second-level schools as identified by the Department? Yes No

Please note that the above is a checklist only. Specific acceptance of each of the above commitments is required for your application to be assessed. Without this , your application will be deemed invalid and will not be processed.

- B. Does the application outline the educational philosophy and identify the ethos, gender and medium of instruction of the school proposed? Yes No
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C. If the applicant is not already an existing school patron and is not a statutory body (or otherwise formed with a constitution providing satisfactorily for succession and continuity) does the application include evidence of being established as a corporate entity, such as a company limited by guarantee? Yes No

D. Do the memorandum and articles of association (or other documentation) articulate their educational philosophy and educational objectives? Yes No

E. Are the names of at least three directors or trustees supplied? Yes No

F. Has evidence of charitable status with the Charities Regulatory Authority been supplied? Yes No

G. Has the electronic copy of the completed parental preference template in Excel spreadsheet format been emailed as required by the closing deadline? Yes No

H. Has the electronic copy of the parental preference template accompanied by the signed parental Preferences Declaration Form? Yes No

I. Has a breakdown of expenditure been provided as per the €300 (inclusive of VAT) maximum expenditure limit? Yes No
