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 Primary Schools due to open in September 2017 and September 2018

28 November 2016

Dear Patron/Prospective Patron,

As you may be aware, on 17 November 2015, the establishment of three new primary schools for 2017 and one new primary school for 2018 were announced to cater for increased demographic needs. The schools are being established to meet the need for school places due to the increased number of young children living within the particular areas to be served by each school.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Year of Opening</th>
<th>School Planning area to be served</th>
<th>Indicative school start-up sizes (Junior Infant intake)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Ballincollig, Co. Cork</td>
<td>1 Junior Infant classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin</td>
<td>Up to 2 Junior Infant classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Palletstown, Dublin 7 (Scribblestown/ Finglas West school planning area)</td>
<td>Up to 2 Junior Infant classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Dublin South City Centre (Regional Solution for Dublin 2/4 and Dublin 6/ Clonskeagh school planning areas)</td>
<td>Up to 3 Junior Infant classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To advance the patronage process for these four schools, a meeting will be held in the Tullamore Office of the Department of Education and Skills on Thursday, 1 December, 2016 at 11am for patrons and prospective patrons. Mandatory requirements/arrangements and procedures for deciding on the patronage of these new schools will be discussed.
I would appreciate if you could reply by Wednesday, 30 November, 2016 to indicate your availability to attend this meeting, or nominate a representative. Please contact liz_marriott@education.gov.ie or phone 057 9325403 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 parental preferences) for patronage of these new schools is 5pm on Friday, 6 January, 2017. Applications should be emailed to liz_marriott@education.gov.ie.

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

Each of the four schools is being established to meet a projected demographic need to cater for children living within the school planning area to be served by the school who are due to start school in 2017 or 2018. A map of the relevant area for each new school is published on the Department’s website. A link to the document containing the maps is as follows: [http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Establishing-a-New-School/](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Establishing-a-New-School/)

Please find attached, for information, a copy of a document “Arrangements for Patronage in the Establishment of New Primary Schools due to open in September 2017 and 2018”. This document 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. All applicants must comply with published mandatory requirements and criteria under that process.

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 (Template September 2017) (Template September 2018). All information must be presented in this format only and returned by email to the Department, accompanied by a signed declaration form. You should also include an Eircode for all addresses.

In addition to parents having an opportunity to express their preference for a patron body, they are also given an opportunity to express a preference for their child to be educated through the medium of Irish or of English. The template for parental preferences reflects this change. You may recall that this change was included for the last patronage process for the post-primary schools and it was flagged that this would be rolled out for subsequent processes.
Also attached is the Code of Conduct for patron/prospective patron bodies relating to canvassing parents for their particular preferred model of patronage. **Please note that this Code of Conduct is now mandatory.** A breach of same may render the patron/prospective patron’s application invalid and result in elimination from the current patronage process. Please note that the code contains maximum expenditure limits.

The New Schools Establishment Group (NSEG) in its report to the Minister on the patronage of the nine post-primary schools to open in 2017 and 2018 recommended that patron applicants should be aware of communications from schools under their patronage and from other groups affiliated to them in relation to potential breaches of the code of conduct and act in accordance with the spirit of the code.

The NSEG noted that some patrons submit very considerable numbers of invalid parental preferences, which have to be individually identified and disaggregated from the valid preferences and which has a knock-on effect on the duration of the assessment process, adding unnecessarily to the work of the Department in assessing the applications and which is not to the benefit of any patron. The Department reminds patron applicants that only valid parental preferences from the areas to be served by the schools will be taken into account.

The Group recommends that consideration is given to an examination of other options for a more effective and efficient means of disseminating information to parents and of collecting parental preferences. The Department is currently examining the feasibility of implementing this recommendation for future patronage processes.

Recent experience has demonstrated that the local networks available to patron bodies enable them to respond more effectively in identifying and sourcing suitable temporary start-up accommodation for new schools. Therefore, an additional requirement has been added to the patronage commitments, where patrons must agree to identify and source suitable temporary accommodation, within parameters set by the Department, where this is deemed necessary by the Department.

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 Primary Schools due to open in September 2017 and 2018*” will result in an application being deemed invalid and invalid applications will not be assessed further as part of the process.

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 have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Enclosures:

- Enclosure 1: Arrangements for Patronage in the Establishment of New 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 primary schools due to open in September 2017 and September 2018

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

- The demographics of the area must support the need for the establishment of a new school (or where meeting demographic need through the extension of existing schools would leave an unmet demand for diversity of patronage).

- 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 primary school:

- The Department will proactively identify the areas where significant additional school accommodation is required.

- Identification of locations of new schools and sizes of new schools by the Department.

- In concluding as to whether a demographic need might be met through extension projects in local schools, the Department should not seek to extend accommodation in existing schools of a certain patronage, where there is a certain level of demand for patronage of a different type in that area.

- 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 criteria considered in the patronage assessment process are the following:

- The development already achieved by recently-established schools of a particular patronage in the identified area and the potential for future growth of these schools;
- The extent or range of diversity of patronage offered across existing schools in the identified area, having regard to the views of parents;
- The proximity of schools of similar ethos to those proposed by the applicant patrons;
- How the proposed schools under the respective patrons would provide for extending or strengthening diversity of provision in each area, having regard to the views of parents;
- Parental demand for the school that a patron is willing to establish;
- The extent to which schools of similar patronage in the area have already expanded to at least three streams (subject to space on an existing site etc.);
- In an area to be served by a single school, the extent to which the needs of all pupils in the area can be met by the school.

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 start school within the next five years i.e. 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021 for the 2017 schools and 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 for the 2018 school 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. A template for submission of parental demand will be provided for this purpose, and all information must be presented in this format only.

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 prioritise enrolment of children in the area 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 have up to three streams subject to demand for the school;

• 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 be part of a campus development with other primary or second-level schools as identified by the Department;

• That the prospective patron is willing, where deemed necessary by the Department, to identify and source suitable interim accommodation within the parameters set 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, Appendix A outlines general information for prospective patrons on the requirements to be put in place.

Department of Education and Skills
November 2016
Appendix A: 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.


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 Primary Schools due to open in September 2017 and September 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 and within an aggregate limit for the three areas where the new schools are to be established in 2016. A limit of €300 per patron will be maintained for expenditure in an individual area. Where a group of organisations is engaged in a joint application or applications, the collective expenditure of the groups should not exceed €300 in an individual area.

- Patrons agree to provide/publish audited 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.

- Please note that securing the patronage of a new primary school in the area to be served does not confer rights of transfer to any particular post-primary schools in that area. This means that regardless of the patronage decision for the new primary schools, pupils will have transfer rights to post-primary schools in the area in the normal way.
• 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
November 2016
Enclosure 3

Checklist for applicants applying for patronage of new 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 enrolments up to three steams subject to the demand for the School?  
         Yes ☐  No ☐
      
      6. enter into the appropriate standard lease agreement with the Department of Education and Skills?  
         Yes ☐  No ☐
      
      7. share school buildings with other schools as may be determined by the Department should the building not be in full use?  
         Yes ☐  No ☐
      
      8. be part of a campus development with other primary or post-primary schools as identified by the Department?  
         Yes ☐  No ☐
      
      9. identify and source suitable temporary accommodation, within parameters set by the Department, where this is deemed necessary 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 ☐
C. If the applicant is not already an existing school patron and is not a statutory
test 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 been
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 ☐