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Report for New Schools Establishment Group

**Patronage for new primary schools
to open in September 2016**

April 2016

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Foreword

Mr. Seamus McGuinness,
Chairperson,
New Schools Establishment Group.

Dear Mr. McGuinness,

On 5 February, 2015 the Minister for Education and Skills announced that seven new primary schools were to be established over the following two years.

Of the seven new schools, four opened in 2015 (the patronage process has already been completed) with the other three scheduled to open in 2016.

Applications have been invited for the patronage of the three new primary schools due to commence operation in September 2016. The closing date for receipt of applications from patron/prospective patron bodies was 24 March 2016.

The areas to be served by the three new schools are:

County	School planning area to be served	Long-term projected enrolment for the new school
Dublin	Cabra/Phibsborough Dublin 7	*Up to 16 classrooms
Dublin	Drumcondra/Marino Dublin 1	*Up to 16 classrooms
Dublin	Goatstown/Stillorgan Co. Dublin	*Up to 16 classrooms

* Up to 16 classrooms i.e. 2 junior infant intakes

The criteria for recognition of new schools are contained in **Appendix A**.

The New Schools Establishment Group, an independent advisory group, is tasked with advising the Minister on the patronage of the new schools following its consideration of a report prepared by Department officials.

This is the report for the New Schools Establishment Group on the three new primary schools to be established in 2016 where patronage is to be determined.

The Report is submitted for the Group's consideration please.

Mary Carney,
Assistant Principal,
Department of Education and Skills
April 2016.

Recommendations - summary

An assessment of each individual application by area is attached to this report at Appendix C, D and E. A summary of the Department's recommendations contained in those assessment reports is as follows:

County	School planning area	Recommended patron body
Dublin	Cabra/Phibsborough Dublin 7	Educate Together
Dublin	Drumcondra/Marino Dublin 1	Educate Together
Dublin	Goatstown/Stillorgan Co. Dublin	An Foras Pátrúnachta

Basis for the Department's recommendations

Cabra, Phibsborough, Dublin 7

Applications were received from four patron/prospective patron bodies to operate this school –

- Secular Schools Ireland Ltd. (prospective patron body),
- City of Dublin Education and Training Board,
- Educational Society of Ireland Ltd (prospective patron body)
and
- Educate Together Ltd

All applicants agreed to the criteria.

The models of provision proposed by all applicants would extend diversity of provision within the area to be served by the new school. The overall parental demand for the multi-denominational model proposed by Educate Together is exceptionally strong and is more than seven times greater than that of the next nearest applicant. On the basis that a new school under the patronage of Educate Together would strengthen diversity of provision and on the basis of the strong parental preference for that model, the Department recommends that Educate Together be appointed as patron.

Drumcondra, Marino, Dublin 1

Applications were received from five patron/prospective patron bodies to operate this school –

- An Foras Pátrúnachta
- Secular Schools Ireland Ltd. (prospective patron body),
- City of Dublin Education and Training Board,
- Educational Society of Ireland Ltd (prospective patron body)
and
- Educate Together Ltd

All applicants agreed to the criteria.

The models of provision proposed by all applicants would extend diversity of provision within the area to be served by the new school. The models proposed by Educate Together and An Foras Pátrúnachta both received a high level of parental preference. However, the level of preference for the Educate Together model exceeds that of An Foras by over 70%. On the basis that a new school under the patronage of Educate Together would strengthen diversity of provision and on the basis of the strong parental preference for that model, the Department recommends that Educate Together be appointed as patron.

Goatstown, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin

Applications were received from five patron/prospective patron bodies to operate this school –

- An Foras Pátrúnachta
- Secular Schools Ireland Ltd. (prospective patron body),
- Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board,
- Educational Society of Ireland Ltd (prospective patron body)
and
- Educate Together Ltd

All applicants agreed to the criteria.

The models of provision proposed by all applicants would extend diversity of provision within the area to be served by the new school. The models proposed by Educate Together and An Foras Pátrúnachta both received a high level of parental preference. However, the level of preference for the An Foras model exceeded that of Educate Together. On the basis that a new school under the patronage of An Foras would strengthen diversity of provision and on the basis of the strong parental preference for the model the Department recommends that An Foras Pátrúnachta be appointed as patron.

Other information

The Department notes that all applicants have agreed and undertaken to meet the Department's requirements and rules in relation to the establishment and operation of the schools. New schools receive temporary recognition initially to safeguard the interests of pupils, parents and all interested parties in this regard. Details of the mandatory requirements and criteria to be satisfied and accepted by prospective school patrons are provided in Appendix A attached.

Appendix A

Arrangements for patronage of new schools

ARRANGEMENTS FOR PATRONAGE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PRIMARY SCHOOLS due to open in September 2016

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. 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020 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;

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
February 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 have charitable status.

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.

Appendix B

Summary of current school types in the Irish primary education sector

Historically Irish schools catered for a relatively homogenous group of pupils and came under the patronage of a small number of religious groups. Since the 1970s a number of developments have taken place in response to a greater demand for diversity. Traditionally the ethos of most primary schools has been religious with over 90% being under the patronage of the Catholic Church. As the profile of the population has changed so has the patronage system changed with a subsequent increase in a diverse range of school types.

The history of the patronage system has meant that the educational philosophy of the patron, be it religious or linguistic, translates into a distinctive character of the education provided in the school. A variety of terms has been used to describe this distinctive character of a school:

- Ethos
- Characteristic spirit
- Mission
- Purpose
- Philosophy

The Department of Education and Skills currently classifies primary schools as denominational, inter-denominational and multi-denominational offering education through the medium of English or Irish (all-Irish schools in Gaeltacht areas and all-Irish schools outside of Gaeltacht areas). A description of each category and the main types of schools currently within each category is outlined below. In addition a description of Gaelscoileanna is also outlined below.

1. **Denominational schools**

The majority of denominational schools are under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The other main denominational schools currently recognised by the Department are Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist, Muslim, Jewish and Quaker schools.

Schools under the patronage of the main religious beliefs operate an ethos in accordance with the main principles of that particular religion/ belief system. In many cases this includes faith formation during the school day. In the context of the Education Act 1998, the Department of Education & Skills recognises the rights of the various church authorities to design curricula in religious education in primary schools and to supervise their teaching and implementation and the Act makes provision for the teaching of religious education and religious instruction in these schools. Denominational schools support the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

2. **Multi-Denominational schools**

Religion may be taught as part of the school day or may be taught outside of the school day. The main types of multi-denominational schools currently

recognised by the Department are Educate Together Schools, Community National Schools, Lifeways Ireland/Steiner National Schools, and the John Scottus National School. A brief description of the school type of each patron currently in the Irish primary education sector is outlined below:

Educate Together National Schools – Educate Together had defined its ethos as multi-denominational, i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected. This is now expressed as “equality based”. The schools do not provide for any faith formation or religious observance during school hours but do facilitate faith formation on school premises outside of school hours.

Educate Together delivers an Ethical Education programme entitled “Learn Together”. This programme specifically addresses the Educate Together ethos.

Community National Schools - The Community National School (CNS) is a new model of primary school patronage which is being developed in a pilot mode since 2008 in which the State is directly involved in the provision of primary education.

The schools are multi-belief and welcome and respect children of all beliefs and none. They recognise and aim to accommodate the wishes of parents to have their children receive religious education and faith formation in the school setting within the school day. A multi-belief programme, called *Goodness Me! Goodness You!* providing for the delivery of religious education and faith formation in the CNSs, is being developed on an action research basis over the course of the pilot.

Lifeways Ireland/Steiner National Schools – Based on the work of scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner this form of education began in 1919 with the founding of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany. Steiner Waldorf schools offer an academic and practical education which is multi-denominational and co-educational. Classes in religious doctrine are not part of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum and children of all religious backgrounds attend Steiner Waldorf schools.

John Scottus National School – Founded in 1986 by a group of like-minded parents studying philosophy, the School’s ethos has a philosophical base. Self-discovery, Resilience and Universality are at the heart of a John Scottus Education. The School’s aim is to instill in pupils a robust inner-belief. This is for resilience of character, personal fulfillment and for the benefit of society at large. Central to the School’s ethos is the aspiration that each pupil will see themselves as unlimited, empowering them to discover their own unique talent. Furthermore the school endeavours to help each pupil to develop a robust and resilient character through the process of self-discovery, and they will come to trust that ‘good’ exists in this world.

3. **Gaelscoileanna**

In common with all schools, Gaelscoileanna follow the standard curriculum as set by the Department of Education and Skills. Irish is the teaching language in the school and the language of communication between the teachers, the students, the parents and the board of management. The principal aim of Irish-

medium schools is to provide excellence in education and the ethos of Irish-medium schools helps to keep Irish as a living language in the community.

In terms of ethos, a gaelscoil can be denominational, multi-denominational or inter-denominational depending on the local circumstances.

4. Special Schools

Special schools meet the educational needs of pupils whose needs could not be adequately catered for in ordinary primary schools.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. The Council was first established as an independent statutory body by order of the Minister for Education and Science in December 2003. NCSE's local service is delivered through a national network of Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) who interact with parents and schools and liaise with the HSE in providing resources to support children with special educational needs.

Appendix C

Assessment Report for Cabra/Phibsborough, Dublin 7

Appendix D

Assessment Report for Drumcondra/Marino, Dublin 1

Appendix E

Assessment Report for Goatstown/Stillorgan, Co. Dublin