

## THORNHILL COLLEGE

142 Culmore Road

Londonderry BT48 8JF

**Tel No:** 028 7135 5800

**E-mail:** info@thornhill.derry.ni.sch.uk

**Web:** www.thornhillcollege.org.uk

**Principal:** Ms S Mallett BSSc, MSc, MSc, PGDFHE, PQH

**Chairperson of the Board of Governors:** Mrs Siobhan Porter BArch, DipArch

**Voluntary Grammar School**

**Girls Age Range:** 11-18

**Admission Number:** 200

**Enrolment Number:** 1410

**Roll Number:** 1367

### Open Day 2026

**Saturday 17 January 2026 - 10.00am – 1.00pm**

**Principal's Address - 10.00am and 12.30pm**

### To Parent(s)/Guardian(s) naming Thornhill College as a Preference on your child's Post-Primary Transfer Application.

#### SEAG Entrance Test Outcomes/Results

The Board of Governors has determined that admission to Thornhill College in 2026 will be by an Entrance Test. All girls who wish to be considered for admission are advised to sit Entrance Assessments in English (or Gaeilge) and Mathematics tests administered by SEAG (Schools' Entrance Assessment Group) on Saturday 15 November and Saturday 22 November 2025. Any girl can choose to sit the test in the most convenient venue offering the SEAG Entrance Assessment Test.

**When completing your daughter's Post-Primary Transfer Application, parent(s)/guardian(s) should submit:**

- a clear statement that she sat the SEAG Entrance Assessment and include the band achieved i.e. **BAND 1, BAND 2, BAND 3, BAND 4, BAND 5, BAND 6.**
- a copy of the official "Statement of Outcomes" BAND achieved, available from secure area of SEAG website.

**WHEN CONSIDERING WHICH CHILDREN SHOULD BE SELECTED FOR ADMISSION, THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS WILL ONLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT INFORMATION WHICH IS SUBMITTED VIA THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION PROCESS. PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) MUST THEREFORE ENSURE THAT ALL INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THEIR CHILD AND RELEVANT TO THE COLLEGE'S ADMISSIONS CRITERIA IS SUBMITTED IN THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION, INCLUDING ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE AND VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION PROCESS CLOSURES AT 12.00 NOON ON THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2026.**

#### Special Circumstances

Any parent(s)/guardian(s) claiming Special Circumstances for their child should carefully read document "Claim for Special Circumstances – A Guide for Parents & Guardians\*" (\*Parents & Guardians of children who have taken the SEAG 2025 Entrance Assessment) available from Thornhill College or from the College website www.thornhillcollege.org.uk. On completion, Claim for Special Circumstances (Form SC1), together with the appropriate independent verified evidence which corroborates the Special Circumstances, must be submitted with the Post-Primary Transfer Application **before the application process closes at 12.00 noon on Thursday 19 February 2026 time being of the essence.** Any claims for Special Circumstances received after that will be considered out of time and will not be considered, unless deemed exceptional by the Board of Governors in their absolute discretion.

#### Special Provisions

Any parent(s)/guardian(s) claiming Special Provisions for their child should carefully read document "Claiming Special Provisions – A Guide for Parents & Guardians\*" (\*Parents & Guardians of children who wish to transfer to post-primary school in September 2026) available from Thornhill College or from the College website www.thornhillcollege.org.uk. On completion, Application for Special Provisions (Form SP), together with the appropriate independent verified evidence which corroborates the Special Provisions, must be submitted with the Post-Primary Transfer Application **before the application process closes at 12.00 noon on Thursday 19 February 2026 time being of the essence.** If a child is moving/arrives in Northern Ireland after this date, claims for Special Provisions must be made directly to the Education Authority.

**Notes:**

The SEAG Entrance Assessment consists of two papers. A pupil who only takes one paper (i.e., either Paper 1 or Paper 2 but not both) will not have completed the full Entrance Assessment. Such pupils will however have their “single paper” marked and will receive a Statement of Outcomes. Outcomes for pupils who only sit one paper will have the designation “e”) (for estimate) immediately after the Outcome. Parents of pupils in this situation can make an application to the school under Special Provisions.

If applying for Special Circumstances or Special Provisions, relevant Application Packs are available from Thornhill College or from the College website.

## **RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS**

The Board of Governors draws up the admissions criteria and delegates to an Admissions Sub-Committee, which includes the Principal, the responsibility for applying these criteria. Any reference herein to the term the Board of Governors includes any Committee or Sub-Committee appointed by the Board of Governors for the purposes of applying the Admissions Criteria set out herein.

### **NORTHERN IRELAND RESIDENTS**

Applicants resident in Northern Ireland at the proposed admission will be considered before all other applicants.

### **ADMISSION OF PUPILS TO YEAR 8**

The Board of Governors has determined that, in the event of the number of applicants being greater than the Admissions Number for the College, applicants shall be selected in the order of priority set down below, based on the information provided at the date of application.

The Board of Governors will NOT use a criterion the position of preference given to the College on the Post-Primary Transfer Application, i.e., an applicant who has chosen Thornhill College in any position on the Post-Primary Transfer Application will be considered equally with those who have put the College first.

## **ADMISSIONS CRITERIA 2026**

**The outcomes/results of the SEAG (Schools’ Entrance Assessment Group) Assessment will be ranked as follows:**

**BAND 1, BAND 2, BAND 3, BAND 4, BAND 5 and BAND 6.**

- 1 Applicants who have been awarded BAND 1 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants for whom Special Circumstances/Special Provision have been accepted by the authorised Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are deemed to be of comparable ability to those being considered within the relevant BAND 1 boundary.
- 2 Applicants who have been awarded BAND 2 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants for whom Special Circumstances/Special Provision have been accepted by the authorised Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are deemed to be of comparable ability to those being considered within the relevant BAND 2 boundary.
- 3 Applicants who have been awarded BAND 3 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants for whom Special Circumstances/Special Provision have been accepted by the authorised Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are deemed to be of comparable ability to those being considered within the relevant BAND 3 boundary.
- 4 Applicants who have been awarded BAND 4 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants for whom Special Circumstances/Special Provision have been accepted by the authorised Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are deemed to be of comparable ability to those being considered within the relevant BAND 4 boundary.
- 5 Applicants who have been awarded BAND 5 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those

applicants for whom Special Circumstances/Special Provision have been accepted by the authorised Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are deemed to be of comparable ability to those being considered within the relevant BAND 5 boundary.

- 6 Applicants who have been awarded BAND 6 in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and also those applicants for whom Special Circumstances/Special Provision have been accepted by the authorised Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors and who, on the documented evidence submitted, are deemed to be of comparable ability to those being considered within the relevant BAND 6 boundary.

**Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must submit a copy of the applicant's statement of results from the SEAG Entrance Assessment with the Post-Primary Transfer Application.**

- 7 In the event of oversubscription of places and there are more applicants with a particular BAND than places remaining, then any available places will be allocated by the application of the following sub-criteria in the order of priority set down below:

- (i) Applicants who, at the date of application, have a child of the family\* currently enrolled at the College or who will be in the coming year.

(See Notes overleaf re Child of the Family Verification.) At the time of the Post-Primary Transfer Application, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure full details of any child of the family currently enrolled at the College i.e. sibling's name, class, year group or name of sibling who will be in the coming year are detailed on the Post-Primary Transfer Application.

- (ii) Applicants who, at the date of their application, are the eldest child of the family to be eligible\*\* to apply for admission to the College.

\*Child of the family as defined in DENI Circular 2025/12. The Department considers that "child of the family" covers:

- a child born to a married couple or to a couple in a civil partnership;
- a child born to a co-habiting couple;
- a child born to a single parent;
- a child of either/any of those people by a previous marriage, civil partnership or relationship;
- a child living with a couple who has been treated as a "child of the family" whether there is a marriage or a civil partnership or not;
- a child living with an individual, who has been treated as a "child of the family";
- an adopted or fostered child; or,
- a situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family.

The child should be a child of the family as at the date of application.

\*\* Eldest child of the family eligible to apply for admission as defined in DENI Circular 2025/12. This wording covers:

- "only" children and is also intended to treat twins (or multiples) as joint eldest;
- Eldest can include eldest girl in the case of single sex schools;
- Where a family has not had the opportunity to have an elder child already and currently enrolled e.g. in the cases where a child is more than 7 years younger than their next sibling; cases where a family has moved residence; or cases where an older sibling cannot attend mainstream school, for example attends a special school.

(See Notes overleaf re Eldest/First Girl/Age/Name Verification.) At the time of the Post-Primary Transfer Application, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that Verification requirements are adhered to and submitted with the Post-Primary Transfer Application.

- (iii) Applicants who, at the date of application, are a Child Looked After\*\*\*

\*\*\*Child Looked After is defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995 as:

- Children “who are in the care of a Trust or who are provided with accommodation by a Trust.”
- Accommodation may be in a residential home, residential school, foster placement or in a family placement with a relative or occasionally at home.

(See Notes overleaf re Child Looked After Verification.) At the time of the Post-Primary Transfer Application, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that Verification requirements are adhered to and submitted with the Post-Primary Transfer Application.

- 8 In the event of oversubscription after the application of sub-criteria 7 (i-iii), applicants will be selected for admission on the basis of initial letter(s) of surname as entered on the pupil’s birth certificate in the order set out below:

**Q H Y A N E L G O J I T V B K X Mc U S C D P Mac M F W R Z**

This order was determined by random selection and witnessed by an independent adjudicator.

In the event of surnames beginning with the same initial letter, the subsequent letters of the surnames will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of two identical surnames, the alphabetical order of the initials of forenames will be used. In the event of the forenames beginning with the same initial letter, the subsequent letters of the forenames will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of identical surnames and forenames, the initial of the second forename will be used. If any of these applicants do not have a second forename they will be placed ahead of those with a second forename. If applicants have identical surnames and forenames, they will be placed in rank order of eldest child by date of birth as stated on their birth certificate and admitted in this order. If, after this process, any applicants still tie for a final place, the place(s) will be allocated by random computerised selection.

(See notes overleaf re Eldest/First Girl/Age/Name Verification.)

- 9 Applicants other than those satisfying any one of criteria 1 – 8 above.

In the event of oversubscription of places and there are more applicants who satisfy criterion 9 than places remaining, then any available places will be allocated by the application of the following sub-criteria in the order of priority set down below:

- (i) Applicants who, at the date of application, have a child of the family\* currently enrolled at the College or who will be in the coming year.

(See Notes overleaf re Child of the Family Verification.) At the time of the Post-Primary Transfer Application, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure full details of any child of the family currently enrolled at the College i.e. sibling’s name, class, year group or name of sibling who will be in the coming year are detailed on the Post-Primary Transfer Application.

- (ii) Applicants who, at the date of their application, are the eldest child of the family to be eligible\*\* to apply for admission to the College.

\*Child of the family as defined in DENI Circular 2025/12. The Department considers that “child of the family” covers:

- a child born to a married couple or to a couple in a civil partnership;
- a child born to a co-habiting couple;
- a child born to a single parent;
- a child of either/any of those people by a previous marriage, civil partnership or relationship;

- a child living with a couple who has been treated as a “child of the family” whether there is a marriage or a civil partnership or not;
- a child living with an individual, who has been treated as a “child of the family”;
- an adopted or fostered child; or,
- a situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family.

The child should be a child of the family as at the date of application.

**\*\* Eldest child of the family eligible to apply for admission as defined in DENI Circular 2025/12. This wording covers:**

- “only” children and is also intended to treat twins (or multiples) as joint eldest;
- Eldest can include eldest girl in the case of single sex schools;
- Where a family has not had the opportunity to have an elder child already and currently enrolled e.g. in the cases where a child is more than 7 years younger than their next sibling; cases where a family has moved residence; or cases where an older sibling cannot attend mainstream school, for example attends a special school.

(See Notes overleaf re Eldest/First Girl/Age/Name Verification.) At the time of the Post-Primary Transfer Application, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that Verification requirements are adhered to and submitted with the Post-Primary Transfer Application.

(iii) Applicants who, at the date of application, are a Child Looked After\*\*\*

**\*\*\*Child Looked After is defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995 as:**

- Children “who are in the care of a Trust or who are provided with accommodation by a Trust.”
- Accommodation may be in a residential home, residential school, foster placement or in a family placement with a relative or occasionally at home.

(See Notes overleaf re Child Looked After Verification.) At the time of the Post-Primary Transfer Application, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that Verification requirements are adhered to and submitted with the Post Primary Transfer Application.

10 In the event of oversubscription after the application of sub-criteria 9 (i-iii), applicants will be selected for admission on the basis of initial letter(s) of surname as entered on the pupil’s birth certificate in the order set out below:

**Q H Y A N E L G O J I T V B K X Mc U S C D P Mac M F W R Z**

This order was determined by random selection and witnessed by an independent adjudicator.

In the event of surnames beginning with the same initial letter, the subsequent letters of the surnames will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of two identical surnames, the alphabetical order of the initials of forenames will be used. In the event of the forenames beginning with the same initial letter, the subsequent letters of the forenames will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of identical surnames and forenames, the initial of the second forename will be used. If any of these applicants do not have a second forename they will be placed ahead of those with a second forename. If applicants have identical surnames and forenames, they will be placed in rank order of eldest child by date of birth as stated on their birth certificate and admitted in this order. If, after this process, any applicants still tie for a final place, the place(s) will be allocated by random computerised selection.

## NOTES:

WHEN CONSIDERING WHICH CHILDREN SHOULD BE SELECTED FOR ADMISSION, THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS WILL ONLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT INFORMATION WHICH IS SUBMITTED VIA THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION PROCESS. PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) MUST THEREFORE ENSURE THAT ALL INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THEIR CHILD AND RELEVANT TO THE COLLEGE'S ADMISSIONS CRITERIA IS SUBMITTED IN THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION, INCLUDING ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE AND VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION PROCESS CLOSES AT 12.00 NOON ON THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2026.

THE PROVISION OF FALSE OR INCORRECT INFORMATION, OR THE FAILURE TO PROVIDE VERIFYING OR OTHER DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BY THE REQUIRED DEADLINE, MAY RESULT IN EITHER THE WITHDRAWAL OF A PLACE OR THE INABILITY OF THE COLLEGE TO OFFER A PLACE.

## DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require/request such supplementary evidence as it may reasonably determine to support evidence or verify information on any applicant's Post-Primary Transfer Application. Therefore, information contained within an application that qualifies the applicant for admission will be verified.

### **CHILD OF THE FAMILY CURRENTLY ENROLLED OR WHO WILL BE IN THE COMING YEAR VERIFICATION**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of children transferring should be aware that if they are using criteria relating to child of the family currently enrolled at the College or who will be in the coming year, then that information will be verified. At the time of the Post-Primary Transfer Application, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that full details of any child of the family currently enrolled at the College i.e. **Sibling's Name, Class, Year Group** or name of sibling who will be in the coming year are detailed in the Post-Primary Transfer Application.

### **ELDEST / FIRST GIRL / AGE / NAME VERIFICATION**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of children transferring should be aware that if they are using criteria relating to a child's age or child's relationship, then that information will be verified. At the time of the Post-Primary Transfer Application, a copy of the child's birth certificate and verifying letter stating that the child is the eldest eligible girl and that the family is known to the verifier must be submitted with the Post-Primary Transfer Application. *The verifying letter must be written on headed notepaper and signed by one of the following and who is not a member of the applicant's family:*

- (i) *a primary school principal; or*
- (ii) *a medical practitioner; or*
- (iii) *a solicitor; or*
- (iv) *a clergyman or equivalent*

The birth certificate should also be submitted at the time of the Post Primary Transfer Application to verify initial letter(s) of the child's surname/forename(s), if applicable.

### **CHILD LOOKED AFTER VERIFICATION**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of children transferring should be aware that if they are using criteria relating to Child Looked After, then that information will be verified by the appropriate authority. At the time of the *Post-Primary Transfer Application*, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that a verifying letter from the appropriate authority confirming the Child Looked After status for this child is submitted with the Post-Primary Transfer Application. The verifying letter must be written on headed notepaper and signed by the appropriate authority.

### **ADDRESS VERIFICATION**

**AT THE TIME OF THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION PROCESS, ADDRESS VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION. ADMISSION WILL NOT BE FINALISED UNTIL VERIFICATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED.**

All parent(s)/guardian(s) of children resident in Northern Ireland transferring must verify their address in Northern Ireland by providing any two of the following nine documents which **MUST** be submitted with their Post-Primary Transfer Application:

- (i) A bank or building society statement of the Parents/Guardians/Child which shows the address at which the child is resident;
- (ii) A utility bill of the Parents/Guardians (electricity, gas, television licence, telephone (landline), Land and Property Service rate demand which shows the address at which the child is resident;
- (iii) A letter awarding Child Benefit to the child or another letter relating to this benefit;
- (iv) The child's Medical Card;
- (v) Electoral ID card;
- (vi) Driving Licence;
- (vii) Addressed payslip;
- (viii) Mortgage statement;
- (ix) Rental agreement.

**THE COLLEGE SEEKS AN ANNUAL VOLUNTARY PARENTAL CONTRIBUTION. THE PARENTAL CONTRIBUTION FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027 HAS BEEN SET AT £100 PER CHILD. THIS IS USED TO ENHANCE AND ENRICH PUPILS' EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH ACTIVITIES THAT OTHERWISE COULD NOT BE FINANCED FROM THE SCHOOL BUDGET.**

**THE POST-PRIMARY TRANSFER APPLICATION PROCESS OPENS ON 27 JANUARY 2026 AT 12 NOON. APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CLOSING DATE OF 19 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 12 NOON WILL BE CONSIDERED AS PUNCTUAL APPLICATIONS. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 12 NOON ON 19 FEBRUARY 2026 AND UP TO 4.00PM ON 24 FEBRUARY 2026 WILL BE MARKED AS LATE APPLICATIONS. ALL APPLICATIONS WHETHER PUNCTUAL OR LATE WILL BE TREATED EQUALLY AND THE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AS SET OUT ABOVE WILL BE APPLIED.**

**A WAITING LIST OF PUPILS WILL BE KEPT. SHOULD A VACANCY ARISE AFTER 9 MAY 2026 ALL APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO YEAR 8, INCLUDING APPLICATIONS THAT WERE INITIALLY REFUSED, NEW APPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS WHERE NEW INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED WILL BE CONSIDERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHOOL'S ADMISSIONS CRITERIA TO FILL THE AVAILABLE PLACE(S).**

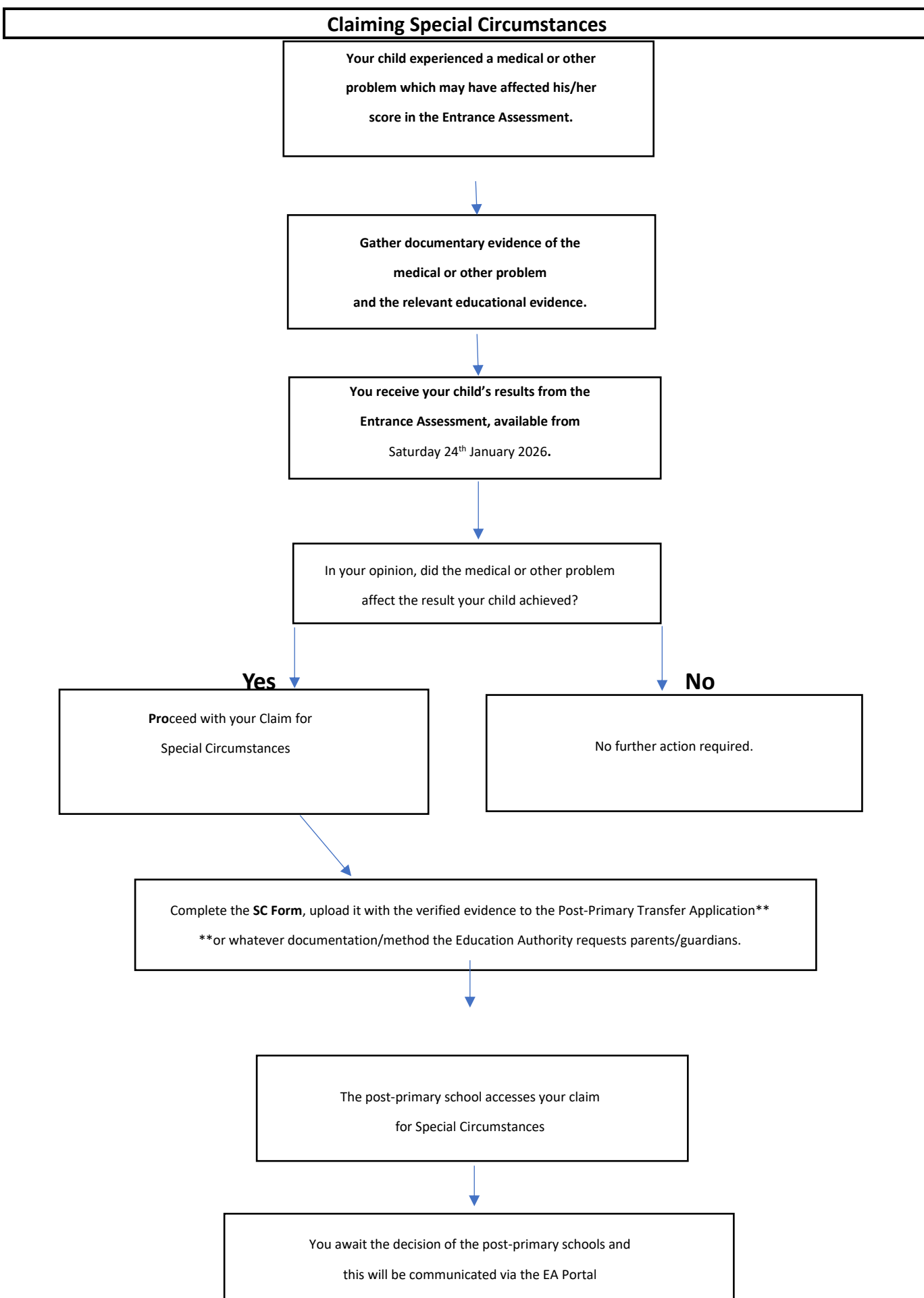
### **NUMBERS OF APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS**

**APPLICANTS WHO HAVE A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WILL HAVE THEIR APPLICATIONS DEALT WITH BY THE EA UNDER SEPARATE ARRANGEMENTS AND ARE SUPERNUMERARY TO THE COLLEGE'S ADMISSIONS AND ENROLMENT NUMBERS.**

Year	Admissions Number	Total Applications	Total Admissions
2023/24	207	213	211*
2024/25	200	184	184
2025/26	200	206	203*

\* Includes figures exceeding the school's approved admissions number due to either statemented children or successful appeals.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES



## Special Circumstances

### What are Special Circumstances?

An application for a School to apply Special Circumstances may be made if medical or other problems affected a pupil's performance in the Entrance Assessment.

Prior to or during the Entrance Assessment, a child might experience medical or other problems which affect his/her performance in the Entrance Assessment and these difficulties are referred to as Special Circumstances. When this child applies for a place in a school which is using the SEAG Entrance Assessment, his/her parents/guardians can provide appropriate evidence to the Board of Governors to show that their child had experienced Special Circumstances and ask that the band/score achieved in the Entrance Assessment should be adjusted.

Recognition or acceptance of a claim for Special Circumstances can only go some way to assist the child affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may have influenced his/her performance in the Entrance Assessment.

The admissions sub-committee in the subject school will assess each claim for Special Circumstances and take a decision on whether Special Circumstances apply and then whether to adjust the band/score achieved in the Entrance Assessment. This process is carried out before any decisions are taken on the children to be selected for admission.

### Has my child experienced Special Circumstances?

As a parent/guardian, you will know whether there have been medical or other problems affecting your child in the period just before or during the Entrance Assessment. While you will not immediately know whether these circumstances have had a detrimental effect on your child's outcomes in the Entrance Assessment, you are best placed to decide if they should be brought to the attention of the schools to which you will be applying for a place for your child for September 2026.

## Making a claim for Special Circumstances

### What should I do?

If you have any concerns that medical or other problems may have affected your child's performance in the Entrance Assessment then you should begin to gather independent evidence to support a potential claim for Special Circumstances. This should include contemporaneous medical, professional or other assessments of your child and relevant supporting educational evidence. (Later in this guidance, you will be provided with advice on how to gather the required evidence and how to present it to the admitting schools.)

On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2026, you should receive your child's results and you will be able to consider whether your child's performance in the assessment was adversely affected by the medical or other problems which he/she experienced just before or during the Entrance Assessment. You can then decide on whether to proceed with a claim for Special Circumstances. If you decide not to proceed with your claim then you need take no further action and you should proceed with your application for a place for your child to the schools of your choice.

If you decide to proceed with your claim for Special Circumstances and you are making an application to one or more of the schools which use the Entrance Assessment outcomes, then you should complete an SC 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\*\*\*.

### What does the Post-Primary School do?

Boards of Governors or their delegated sub-committees have a duty to examine all of the claims for Special Circumstances and decide on their merit and the adjustment, if any, to be applied to the band/score cohort percentile achieved in the Entrance Assessment. Each school which receives your claim for Special Circumstances will make its own independent adjudication on your claim.

The existence of Special Circumstances DOES NOT in itself lead to admission to the school. The School Sub-Committee must also determine whether the Special Circumstance did affect achievement in the Entrance Assessment and, if they determine that it did, adjust the band/score achieved in the Entrance Assessment. This process is carried out before any decisions are taken on the applicants to be selected for admission.

## Examples of situations which could form the basis of a Claim for Special Circumstances

Usually, a claim can be made when the child is affected by adverse circumstances beyond his/her control. To assist you, the list below, while not exhaustive, gives examples of situations which could form the basis of a claim for Special Circumstances:

- a temporary illness or accident or injury at the time of the Entrance Assessment;
- a bereavement of an immediate family member <sup>1</sup> at the time of the Entrance Assessment;
- a serious and disruptive domestic crisis arising at the time of the Entrance Assessment;
- a serious disturbance during the Entrance Assessment;
- accidental events such as being given the wrong or a defective Entrance Assessment paper;
- a failure by the post-primary school to implement previously agreed Access Arrangements;
- a terminal illness of a parent/guardian;
- a life threatening illness of the child or member of immediate family <sup>1</sup>;
- a recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or relative;
- a flare-up of severe congenital conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, severe asthmatic attack;
- a recent serious physical assault.

<sup>1</sup> immediate family member refers to a parent/step-parent, sibling/step-sibling.

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

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

Claims for Special Circumstances must have supporting evidence which usually includes **both**:

- a. details of the medical or other problems which occurred just before or during the Entrance Assessment with verification by an appropriate professional;
- b. verifiable educational evidence to show that the Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS)/BAND achieved in the SEAG Entrance Assessment does not correspond to the academic ability of your child because he/she experienced medical or other problems before or during the time of the Entrance Assessment.

***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 Circumstances, 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 outcomes achieved in the SEAG Entrance Assessment by your child have been recorded in the Application\*\*.
- the results information, for your child which you downloaded from your dashboard from the SEAG website (seagni.co.uk) is uploaded with the Application\*\*.
- **the completed SC Form and all of your documentary evidence is securely uploaded with the Application\*\*\*.**

You are advised to retain a copy of the SC 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 Circumstances?

- The SC Form from the school website should be completed, clearly labelled, and uploaded as a single document;
- 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\_15.11.25\_AR).

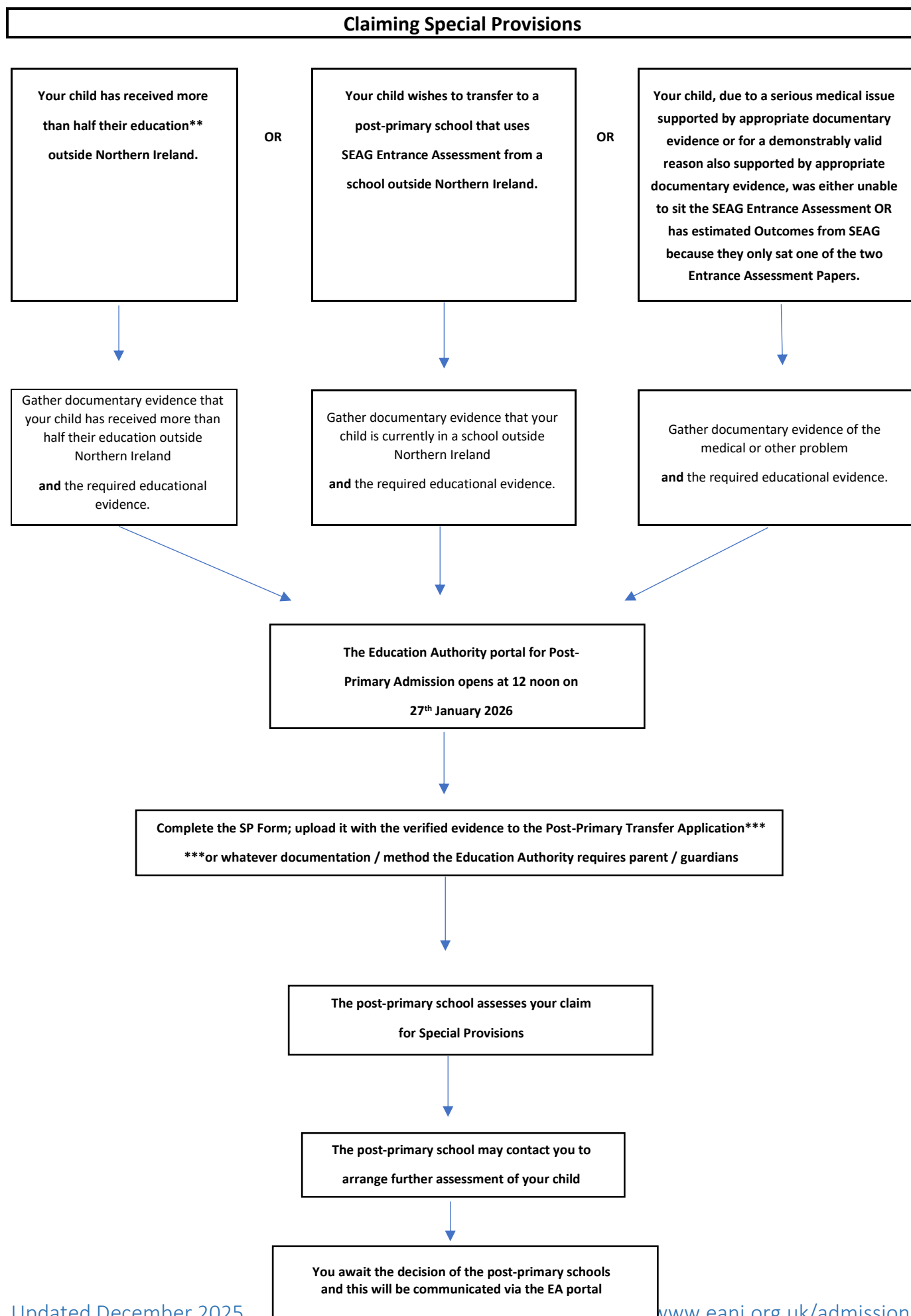
### What will happen to my claim?

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 Circumstances 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 2026 had not been finalised by the Education Authority (EA) at the time of publication of this "Claiming Special Circumstances - A guide for Parents & Guardians" Guide. 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 2026.***

[www.eani.org.uk/admissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/admissions)



## 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 2019) to the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026 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 issue 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 from SEAG 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 (or similar evidence) 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, which 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(s) indicating the nature of the serious medical issue or demonstrably valid reason that 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 an 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 (or similar evidence) 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 which 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 or letters from your child's GP or Medical Consultant or another appropriate professional(s) indicating the nature of the serious medical issue or demonstrably valid reason that 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 Gaeilge in Irish-medium schools) and Mathematics in standardised tests.
- ii. your child's relative performance in English (or Gaeilge 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 are 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 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\_15.11.25\_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 2026 had not been finalised by the Education Authority (EA) at the time of publication of this "Claiming Special Provisions - A guide for Parents & Guardians" Guide. 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 2026.**

### **Admission to Years 9 – 12**

**Pupils will be considered for enrolment provided that:**

1. Their admission will not cause the school to exceed its enrolment number;
2. Their admission will not cause the particular year group to exceed the admissions number set for it, at its time of entry. This limitation will not apply to pupils recently come to reside in the area;
3. In the opinion of the Board of Governors, their admission would not prejudice the efficient use of the school's resources.

Where there are more applicants who meet these criteria than there are places, preference will be given as follows:

- (i) Applicants who held a place in a grammar school elsewhere and who have moved into the catchment area of the College.
- (ii) Applicants whose sibling(s) are pupils of the College in the year in which the application is made.
- (iii) Applicants who had originally applied for a place in the College and whose grade was equal to that of the minimum scored by those accepted that year.

Applications for admission at the start of a school year will normally be considered in late August. Applications for admission during the school year will be considered as soon as possible after the application is received.

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