Claiming Special Provisions

- A Guide for Parents & Guardians *

***Parents & Guardians of children who wish to transfer to post-primary school in September 2026**

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

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

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

Claiming Special Provisions

Your child has received more than half their education** outside Northern Ireland

OR

Your child wishes to transfer to a post-primary school that uses SEAG Entrance Assessment from a school outside Northern Ireland

OR

Your child, due to a 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 estimated Outcomes from SEAG because they only sat one of the two Entrance Assessment Papers.

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Gather documentary evidence that your child has received more than half their education outside Northern Ireland

and the required educational evidence

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Gather documentary evidence that your child is currently in a school outside Northern Ireland

and the required educational evidence

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Gather documentary evidence of the medical or other problem

and the required educational evidence

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The Education Authority portal for post-primary admissions opens at 12 noon on 27th January 2026

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Complete the **SP Form**; upload it with the verified evidence to the Post-Primary Transfer Application***

*** or *whatever documentation / method the Education Authority requires from parents / guardians*

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The post-primary school assesses your claim for Special Provisions

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The post-primary school may contact you to arrange further assessment of your child

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You await the decision of the post-primary schools and this will be communicated via the EA portal

Special Provisions

What is 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 (1st September 2019) to the 27th 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 a 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 Outcomes 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 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.

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 to which 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 Provision?

- 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 has 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.***

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

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

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

**= schools which use academic selection for only part of their total intake*
^= a school with a Main School which is academically selective and an Irish Medium Stream which is not