



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

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CIRCULAR NO 117 OF 2025

TO:

- Deputy Director Generals**
- Chief Directors**
- Directors (Head Office)**
- District Directors**
- Circuit Managers**
- Principals of Schools**
- School Governing Bodies**
- Parents**

**SUBJECT: LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DIRECTIVES FOR 2026
LEARNER ADMISSIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The above matter bears reference.
- 1.2. In accordance with Section 5(7) of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (as amended), the Head of the Department is mandated to determine the procedures for learner admission applications. These Directives are issued to outline the processes and administrative procedures governing the registration and admission of learners.
- 1.3. The Limpopo Department of Education emphasises the importance of early learner enrolment in public schools for the upcoming academic year, recognizing it as a critical factor in enhancing overall academic performance.
- 1.4. Early registration and admission facilitate effective planning by public schools, ensuring that learners receive continuous, equitable, and non-discriminatory access to quality education throughout their schooling journey.

LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DIRECTIVES FOR 2026 LEARNER ADMISSIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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- 1.5. **This circular supersedes all previous learner admission circulars issued by the Limpopo Department of Education in prior years.**

2. PURPOSE OF THE CIRCULAR

- 2.1. The purpose of this circular is to provide clear directives to communities, School Governing Bodies, principals, admission committees, and all departmental structures beyond the school level on the proper administration of learner admissions.
- 2.2. These directives are designed to assist School Governing Bodies in developing and implementing admission policies that promote equitable access to public schools, in compliance with national legislation (South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended) and other applicable legislations and policies.
- 2.3. The circular aims to ensure that principals and admission committees adhere to lawful procedures in the registration and admission of learners
- 2.4. Furthermore, the directives seek to facilitate the timely commencement of effective teaching and learning on the first day of the academic year.
- 2.5. The circular also serves to inform communities, stakeholders, and relevant role players that learner admissions for the 2026 academic year in the Limpopo Province will be conducted through a **Walk-In Admission System**.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1. **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No 108 of 1996):** Section 29 of the Constitution guarantees everyone the right to access basic education. This right is immediately realizable and forms the foundation of all legislation and policies related to school admission and learner enrolment.
- 3.2. **South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA):** Section 5(1) of SASA stipulates that a public school must admit learners and meet their educational needs without unfair discrimination of any kind. Furthermore, Section 5(7) mandates that the Head of Department is responsible for determining the procedures through which learner admissions are to be administered.
- 3.3. **Child Justice Act 75 of 2008:** This Act establishes a distinct criminal justice system for children in conflict with the law. It aims to promote their rehabilitation and reintegration into society, ensuring that children are treated in a manner that considers their age, developmental needs, and best interests.
- 3.4. **Children's Act 38 of 2005:** The act seeks to protect and promote the rights, well-being, and holistic development of all children in South Africa. It provides the legal foundation for ensuring that children are cared for, protected, and given opportunities to thrive in a safe and supportive environment.

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- 3.5. **Promotion of Administrative Justice Act [PAJA] (Act No 3 of 2000):** provides that everyone whose rights have been adversely affected by administrative action has the right to be given written reasons.
- 3.6. **Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (Gazette No.19377 of 1998):** This policy provides the framework for the development of school-based learner admission policies. It supports schools and governing bodies in ensuring consistency, fairness, and compliance with South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended, other applicable national legislations and policies.
- 3.7. **Refugees Act, No 130 of 1998:** The Act provides for the reception, protection, and legal recognition of asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa. It also outlines the rights and obligations of individuals granted refugee status, including the right to access education.
- 3.8. **Immigration Act 13 of 2002:** This legislation regulates the admission, residence, and departure of foreign nationals within the Republic. It ensures that the admission of learners who are not citizens is managed in accordance with legal requirements.
- 3.9. **Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA):** Sets minimum standards for the lawful processing of personal information. Schools must ensure that admission forms include a consent statement authorizing the use of learners' personal data for the purpose of processing applications and other academic reasons such as participating in sports, examinations etc.
- 3.10. **Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 (PEPUDA):** Promotes equality and prohibits unfair discrimination on various grounds. It reinforces the obligation of public schools to uphold the principles of dignity, non-discrimination, and equal access during the admission process.
- 3.11. **Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2 of 2000(PAIA):** Gives effect to the constitutional right of access to information, as enshrined in Section 32 of the Constitution. In terms of this Act, public schools are obligated to provide access to requested records, including the school's admission policy and written responses outlining the reasons for admission or non-admission of learners. Access may only be lawfully denied if valid grounds for refusal exist in accordance with the provisions of the Act.
- 3.12. **Court Judgments and Legal Precedents:** Court judgments serve as authoritative guidance in the interpretation and application of relevant legislation during the learner admission process. These legal decisions assist in ensuring that admission practices are consistent with constitutional principles and statutory provisions.

- 3.13. The legislative instruments outlined above must be taken into consideration by School Governing Bodies when developing school admission policies, and by principals and admission committees when administering learner admissions. These frameworks ensure that all admission processes are lawful, equitable, and aligned with the constitutional values.

4. ADMISSION TO PUBLIC ORDINARY SCHOOL

- 4.1. The right of access to basic education and the right to equitable access to educational institutions are fundamental entitlements enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- 4.2. The above-mentioned right is further articulated and operationalised through the provisions of the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996, as amended, and the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools, published under Government Gazette No. 19377 of October 1998.
- 4.3. The Provincial Department of Education carry a constitutional and legislative responsibility to ensure the provision of basic education to all learners of compulsory school-going age. This obligation must be fulfilled through equitable, inclusive, and non-discriminatory admission practices that uphold the rights and dignity of every child.
- 4.4. In accordance with Section 3(1) of the South African Schools Act, every parent has a legal obligation to ensure that a school going age child for whom they are responsible attends school. This requirement applies from the first school day of the year in which the child **turns six years old** and continues until the learner reaches the age of fifteen years or completes Grade 9, whichever occurs first.
- 4.5. Furthermore, Section 3(6) of the South African Schools Act as amended provides that any individual who, without just cause, prevents a learner who is subject to compulsory school attendance from attending school, is committing a criminal offence. Upon conviction, such a person is liable to a fine or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 12 months, underscoring the seriousness with which the law regards access to education.

5. AGE REQUIREMENT FOR LEARNER ADMISSION

- 5.1. Public schools are obligated to admit learners from Grade R to Grade 12. In accordance with Section 5(4)(a) of the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996, as amended, a child may be registered for Grade R if they are four years old and will turn five on or before 30 June of the admission year. Similarly, a learner may be admitted to Grade 1 if they are five years old and will turn six on or before 30 June of that year.
- 5.2. Priority must be given to learners of compulsory school-going age, which begins at six years old, as outlined in the section mentioned in paragraph 5.1 above.

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- 5.3. It is imperative that all eligible learners of compulsory school-going age are provided with access to placement in ordinary public schools, in full compliance with the relevant legislative framework.
- 5.4. Public schools that admit learners of pre-school age (0–4 years) must prioritise the admission of learners who are five years old on or before the 30 June and those who have reached compulsory school-going age, as defined in the South African Schools Act as amended.

6. PORTION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL RENTED OR LEASED BY PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

- 6.1. Where portions of public-school facilities are being utilized or leased by private institutions or independent schools, such spaces must be prioritised and made available for the accommodation of learners of compulsory school-going age, where necessary. This is to ensure the fulfilment of the Department's constitutional and statutory obligations in respect of access to basic education.
- 6.2. District Directors are instructed to ensure that all available public educational spaces are identified, reprioritized, allocated and utilized to accommodate unplaced or non-admitted learners of compulsory school-going age where required. The District Directors must conduct this process in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.
- 6.3. The Circuit Managers are instructed to facilitate the process of identifying and reprioritizing all available public educational spaces to accommodate unplaced or non-admitted learners of compulsory school going age where required.
- 6.4. The Circuit Managers shall facilitate this process in consultation and collaboration with the governing body of the public institution that has leased the premises to a private/public entity.
- 6.5. Prior to the utilization of any such space, the lessee or current occupant shall be notified of the intention to occupy the public space, in accordance with the provisions of the lease agreement between the school and the lessee and the provisions of such lease agreement must honored.

7. SCHOOL BASED ADMISSION POLICY AND APPROVAL

- 7.1. South African Schools Act, section 5(5) provides that admission policy is determined by the Governing Body which must be based on the framework as provided by gazette No. 19377 of 1998.
- 7.2. The admission policy of an ordinary public school must be consistent with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended, some of the legislations mentioned in paragraph 3 above and other applicable legislation.

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- 7.3. The admission policy of a public school and administration of admission by the principal or departmental officials may therefore not unfairly discriminate against an applicant who applies for admission to a school.
- 7.4. Policies developed by the governing body must be submitted to the Head of Department of Education or his or her delegate for quality assurance and approval prior implementation of the policy. The Head of Department or his/her delegate will ensure that the policy does not contravene the Constitution of the RSA including other relevant legislation and policies.
- 7.5. While the school governing body determines the admission policy, it is the responsibility of the principal to administer admission of learners as delegated by the Head of Department (HoD).
- 7.6. School principals must request learner profiles from the learner's previous school upon admission. In cases where learners are entering Grade R or Grade 1, principals must initiate the creation of learner profiles in accordance with the requirements of the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) Policy.

8. **ADMISSION OF LEARNERS TO FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS**

- 8.1. South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended, section 12(4), provides that the MEC must, where reasonably practicable, provide education for learners with special educational needs at ordinary public schools and provide relevant educational support services for such learners.
- 8.2. Learners who are to be admitted in a full-service school will follow the ordinary mainstream procedures except for learners referred to by Inclusive Education Directorate / Sub-directorate.

9. **ADMISSION OF LEARNERS TO SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

- 9.1. Learners who deserve to be admitted in the special school must be assessed by the Inclusive Education directorate/Sub-directorate in terms of SIAS Policy before they can be admitted.
- 9.2. A learner shall be assessed through Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support [SIAS] policy, to be admitted to a Special or full-service school.
- 9.3. Inclusive directorate/sub-directorate in collaboration with Institutional governance directorate/sub-directorate of the department of education is directed to facilitate placement of learners who are kept in care centres.
- 9.4. The criterion in paragraph 15 below shall not apply to **Special schools**.

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10. ADMISSION TO FOCUS SCHOOLS

- 10.1. Focus schools refer to schools focusing on a specific curriculum intending to address challenges affecting the country, for example technical schools and agricultural schools.
- 10.2. Focus schools are instructed to prioritize the admission of learners who reside in close proximity to the school. Thereafter, preference should be given to learners residing within the boundaries of the Limpopo Province. Learners from outside the province may only be considered once all eligible learners from within the immediate vicinity and the Limpopo Province have been admitted and placed.
- 10.3. Circuit Managers are responsible for ensuring full compliance with the directive outlined in paragraph 10.2.

11. LEARNER ADMISSION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH HOSTELS

- 11.1. Learner admissions in public schools with hostel facilities shall also be guided by the criteria outlined in this circular.
- 11.2. Schools with hostels are expected to prioritise and make provision for vulnerable learners, including orphans, children in foster care, and those living in unsafe home environments.
- 11.3. Learners seeking admission to public schools with hostels may also be considered based on having siblings currently enrolled at the school.
- 11.4. Public schools with Hostels are instructed to prioritize the admission of learners who reside in close proximity to the school. Thereafter, preference should be given to learners residing within the boundaries of the Limpopo Province. Learners from outside the province may only be considered once all eligible learners from within the immediate vicinity and the Limpopo Province have been admitted and placed.
- 11.5. It should be noted that payment of hostel fees or learners residing in the hostel will be incurred by the parents of the learners.

12. ADMISSION OF LEARNERS TO FEE-PAYING SCHOOLS

- 12.1. Except in the case of No-Fee Schools (i.e., schools classified as Quintiles 1, 2, and 3), public schools are permitted to charge compulsory school fees. Parents are expected to pay these fees. However, where a parent is unable to afford the full amount or can only make a partial payment, the school is still required to admit the learner.

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- 12.2. The school has an obligation to assist **parents** who are unable to pay school fees by guiding them through the application process for either full or partial exemption. Parents are expected to cooperate with the school by providing accurate and complete information.
Note: Principals must inform parents of the exemption process and ensure that the necessary application forms are made available.
- 12.3. It is the parent's responsibility to provide evidence of their inability or limited ability to pay school fees. The School Governing Body (SGB) is responsible for evaluating the application and determining whether the parent qualifies for full or partial exemption in accordance with the applicable criteria.
- 12.4. A public school may, through legal means, enforce the payment of school fees from parents who are deemed liable for such payments, in accordance with Section 41 of the *South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996*, as amended.
- 12.5. The purpose of Paragraphs 12.1 to 12.4 is to inform officials—namely School Principals, Circuit Managers, and District Directors—that all public schools, whether fee-paying or no-fee, are open to learners from all socio-economic backgrounds, including those from unemployed, poor, and affluent communities

13. ADMISSION OF UNDERAGE LEARNERS

- 13.1. An underage learner may only be admitted if the parents provide the Circuit Manager with a report from qualified professionals, such as registered educational psychologists, outlining the exceptional circumstances that justify the learner's early admission.
- 13.2. In cases where parents or guardians fail to provide the Circuit Manager with a report from a qualified expert, the Circuit Manager must not grant approval for the admission of an underage learner.
- 13.3. Ordinary Public Schools are instructed not to admit any underage learner without the prior written approval of the Circuit Manager, supported by an expert report clearly outlining the exceptional circumstances necessitating such admission.
- 13.4. The expert report, along with the Circuit Manager's approval, must be retained in the learner's profile and kept on record until the learner has completed basic education (Grade R to Grade 12), after which it must be disposed of in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act.

14. ADMISSION OR PLACEMENT OF OVER-AGE LEARNERS

- 14.1. In instances where a learner is admitted to an ordinary public school at an age exceeding the prescribed entry requirements outlined above, the learner

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should, wherever reasonably practicable, be placed in a fast-track programme or with their age-appropriate peer group. Such placement must be guided by the principle of serving the learner's best educational interests.

- 14.2. An over-aged learner who is already enrolled in a public ordinary school or a registered independent school and has been compelled to relocate due to circumstances beyond her or his control must be admitted, irrespective of their age.
- 14.3. The admission policy for over-aged learners does not extend to individuals who have never attended school or who fall outside the compulsory school-going age range
- 14.4. A learner referred to in paragraph 14.3 above must be advised to enroll at an Adult Education and Training (AET) center.
- 14.5. An application from an over-aged learner who has been out of school for three years or more must be assessed by the District Directors or their delegated representative. The evaluation must consider the reasons for the interruption in the learner's education, and the final decision must be fair and reasonable.
- 14.6. Should the District Director or their delegated representative approve the re-admission of the over-aged learner, the learner must be placed in a fast-track programme.
- 14.7. The fast-track programme referred to in paragraphs 14.1 and 14.6 must be designed and developed by the school, with support from the District Curriculum Sub-Directorate. The programme must be submitted to the Circuit Office for monitoring and oversight of its implementation.
- 14.8. Schools are directed not to develop their own age requirements except the one provided in the South African Schools Act, as contemplated in paragraph 5.1.

15. PROHIBITED PRACTICES DURING LEARNER ADMISSION

- 15.1. In the Republic of South Africa, public schools are expressly prohibited from engaging in any form of unfair discrimination. Such practices may result in the humiliation, degradation, or mistreatment of learners, thereby violating the fundamental principle of equitable access to education.
- 15.2. The principal and the governing bodies of a school bear the responsibility of ensuring that the following prohibited practices are not undertaken during the process of learner admission or administration.

15.2.1 PAYMENT OF FEES

- 15.2.1.1 In accordance with Section 5(3) of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, as amended, no learner may be denied admission on the basis that their

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parent is unable to pay or has not paid the school fees set by the governing body.

15.2.1.2 A school may not require a parent to pay a registration or admission fee, nor may they demand that the parent sign an agreement to pay school fees as a condition for the learner's admission.

15.2.1.3 Furthermore, Section 39(5) of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, stipulates that no public school may charge any registration, administration, or other fees at the time of application. School fees, where applicable, may only be levied after the learner has been officially admitted to the school.

15.2.2 SUBSCRIPTION TO MISSION STATEMENT

15.2.2.1 Section 5(3)(ii) of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, as amended stipulate that no learner may be refused admission on the grounds that his or her parent refuses to subscribe to the mission statement of the school.

15.2.3 TESTING OR INTERVIEWS OF LEARNERS

15.2.3.1 In accordance with Section 5(2) of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, as amended, the governing body of a public school is prohibited from administering any test, including an interview, as part of the process for admitting a learner to the school.

15.2.3.2 The school governing body is expressly prohibited from directing or authorising the principal of the school, or any other individual, to administer tests related to the admission of learners.

15.2.3.3 The school must not utilise the process of interviewing parents or learners prior to the admission of a learner as a means of screening for admission.

15.2.4 REFUSAL TO ADMIT UNDOCUMENTED LEARNERS

15.2.4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa guarantees every individual in the country the right to access basic education.

15.2.4.2 It is important to note that, as a department, we have a constitutional obligation to ensure that all learners of compulsory school-going age are provided with access to basic education.

15.2.4.3 Section 5(1A) of the South African Schools Act stipulates that any learner whose parent or guardian has not provided the required documentation—such as a birth certificate, immunization card, court placement order, study visa, permanent residence permit, asylum seekers visa, refugee visa, passport, or identity documents. whether pertaining to the learner or the adult acting on their behalf—during the application for admission, must still be allowed to attend school

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- 15.2.4.4** In instances where a parent applies for the admission of a learner without a birth certificate, the parent is required to submit a written affirmation or a sworn statement in the form of an affidavit confirming the learner's age. The affidavit must include the learner's full name (as it will appear on the applied-birth certificate), the identity or passport number of the parent, as well as the contact number and residential address of the parent or guardian. This documentation must be submitted to the school principal
- 15.2.4.5** If the parent is unable to provide the birth certificate and has only submitted a written affirmation or sworn statement concerning the learner's age, the learner must be admitted to the school.
- 15.2.4.6** The school principal must inform the parents that Section 31 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1992 (Act No. 51 of 1992), makes it an offence to make or cause to be made a false statement regarding the age of a child.
- 15.2.4.7** The principal must assist parents by formally referring them to the nearest office of the Department of Home Affairs to obtain birth certificates for their children.

15.2.5 ACADEMIC, SPORT AND CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT

- 15.2.5.1** The use of a learner's academic performance as a criterion for admission to a school is strictly prohibited.
- 15.2.5.2** Schools may not use a learner's achievements in sports or cultural activities, including representation at provincial or national level, as a basis for determining admission.

15.2.6 PRE-SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

- 15.2.6.1** The use of pre-school experience as a criterion for admission into Grade R or Grade 1 is not permitted.
- 15.2.6.2** The entry ages for learners are clearly outlined in paragraph 5 of this circular. As such, the circular provides specific guidance on the admission of both overage and underage learners.

15.2.7 PROHIBITION OF PARENT TO COLLECT AND SUBMIT LEARNER ADMISSION FORM

- 15.2.7.1** No public school may prohibit a parent from collecting and submitting admission application forms on the basis of the school's Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).

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15.2.7.2 Principals and administrative staff are instructed to refrain from discouraging parents from applying for admission at any public school based on the language of teaching and learning.

15.2.7.3 All public schools are required to adhere to the uniform system for the distribution and receipt of admission application forms, as outlined in this circular.

15.2.8 UNAUTHORISED OPENING OF ADMISSION PROCESS

15.2.8.1 The admission application process for the 2026 academic year shall commence only on the date officially announced by the Head of Department.

15.2.8.2 Any public school that has initiated the application process without a directive from the Head of Department is hereby instructed to reverse the process with immediate effect.

15.2.9 THE USE OF ON-LINE SYSTEM

15.2.9.1 Public schools in Limpopo are prohibited from using any school-designed online admission systems, as such practices may lead to confusion within communities.

15.2.9.2 It is important to note that the learner admission process in Limpopo follows a walk-in system, which is applicable to all public schools within the province.

16 CRITERIA FOR LEARNER ADMISSION

16.2 **Priority** must be given to learners who reside within the geographical area where the school is located, including the suburb, township, or village.

16.3 **Secondly**, learners whose siblings are currently enrolled at the school must be given admission priority.

16.4 **Thirdly**, learners who are already attending schools within the same area—particularly those progressing from Grade 7 to Grade 8—must be considered, even if their place of residence is outside the immediate school area.

16.5 **Fourthly**, learners whose parents or legal guardians work within the school's catchment area, as well as those who have selected the school as their preferred choice, must be considered for admission.

16.6 The selection of learners must be based solely on the criteria outlined above.

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- 16.6 Learners must be admitted in the order of the criteria listed in paragraph 14 The principal and the admissions committee must ensure that each preceding criterion is fully applied and exhausted before moving to the next.
- 16.7 No public school may reject a learner based on the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).
- 16.8 **Note: The principle of "first-come, first-served" must be applied within each category listed in paragraphs 15.1 to 15.4.**

17 REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

17.1 FIRST-TIME ADMISSION

17.1.1 If your child is attending school for the first time or is transferring to a new school, you are required to collect registration forms from the school that is:

- (a) Nearest to your home,
- (b) The school where your other children (siblings) are enrolled,
- (c) Located within the area where your child or children are currently attending school,
- (d) Nearest to your workplace, or the school of your choice.

17.2 Documents required.

17.2.1 To register your child you must bring the following documents with you:

- (a) Birth certificate or acceptable proof of birth date in terms of paragraph 15.1.4.4 (a baptism certificate shall not be accepted as valid proof of identity or age)
- (b) Immunization card.
- (c) Transfer card, or written affidavit stating the reason for not having transfer card.
- (d) Last report card and

17.2.2 If you are **not** a South African **citizen**, you must also submit the following documents over and above the documents in paragraph 17.2.1 above:

- (a) Study/work permit.
- (b) Temporary or permanent Residence Permit from the South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

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(c) Evidence that you have **applied for permission** to stay in South Africa.

17.2.3 If you do **not** have all or some of the above documents, you **may still** register your child at the school and the principal of the school **must advise** you to get the required documents.

17.2.4 The principal is expected to provide the Circuit Manager with progress report of learners who applied or successfully secured their identity document or birth certificate.

18 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION

18.1 ADVOCACY FOR LEARNER REGISTRATION

18.1.1 All public schools are encouraged to conduct advocacy campaigns aimed at reminding and encouraging members of the public to register or enroll their children for the upcoming academic year.

18.1.2 These advocacy campaigns must serve to inform parents and learners of the admission requirements, including the supporting documents that must accompany the application.

18.2 DISCLOSURE AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

18.2.1 Schools must make available to applicants the approved school admission policy, the learner code of conduct, and the procedure for applying for exemption from the payment of school fees.

18.2.2 Governing bodies must ensure that all policies distributed to parents have been reviewed and are fully aligned with the relevant legislation referenced in paragraph 3 of this circular.

18.2.3 The disclosure of such information is essential to enable applicants to make informed decisions regarding their children's admission and enrolment.

18.3 COLLECTION AND SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORMS

18.3.1 Applicants must collect application forms from schools in accordance with a schedule developed by each school, based on the Provincial Management Plan for the 2026 learner admission process.

18.3.2 Completed application forms must be returned to schools according to the same schedule, which is aligned with the 2026 Provincial Management Plan for learner admissions in public schools.

18.3.3 All applying parents or guardians must ensure that they personally complete their details in the **Application Submission Register**, using their own

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handwriting. Applicants who are unable to write may request assistance from a designated school official responsible for managing the register.

- 18.3.4 Upon submission of their application forms, applicants must be issued an **application submission number**. It is important to note that the allocation of an application number does not guarantee admission but serves as a reference to assist the school during the selection process.
- 18.3.5 **Application Submission Numbers** must be assigned strictly in accordance with the order, date, and time of submission. *Note:* Parents are encouraged to request their official **Application Submission Number** upon submission.
- 18.3.6 To avoid overcrowding, the distribution and submission of application forms will follow scheduled timeframes based on the grade for which the application is made.
- 18.3.7 The timeframes for the distribution and receipt of application forms are outlined in the **2026 Provincial Learner Admission Management Plan**.
- 18.3.8 Both principals and parents must comply fully with the directives outlined in this Circular and the 2026 Provincial Learner Admission Management Plan to ensure a smooth and orderly admission process.
- 18.3.9 Principals are advised to exercise flexibility in handling applications collected or submitted outside the official dates, where necessary. However, applicants must be informed that submissions made after the closing date will not be prioritized.
- 18.3.10 Application forms may be issued and -submitted back to school on the same day. Schools are expected to be adequately prepared to manage both processes simultaneously.
- 18.3.11 Applicants are advised that the collection and submission of application forms will be open from **22 May 2025 to 31 July 2025**. Submitting applications outside of these stipulated dates, as set out in the 2026 Provincial Learner Admission Management Plan, will result in applications not being prioritized.

18.4 DESIGNATED AREA FOR COLLECTION AND SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORMS

- 18.4.1 Schools must designate a specific area, located away from classrooms but within the school premises, for the collection and submission of admission forms.
- 18.4.2 This measure is intended to safeguard the teaching and learning environment and to ensure that school staff are not disrupted while carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Only the designated official responsible for managing the admission process may engage with parents or members of the public.

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Note: All admission forms must be collected and submitted at the designated area determined by the school.

- 18.4.3 The school principal or the admission committee reserves the right to verify the information submitted in the application process. Should it be discovered that an applicant has provided false or misleading information (e.g., falsified proof of residence, parenthood, or legal guardianship), the application will be disqualified

19 RE-REGISTRATION OF CURRENT LEARNERS

- 19.1 Parents or guardians of learners currently enrolled at the school must confirm, via a re-registration form, whether their children will return to the school in the following academic year. The form must also include an option for parents to indicate if their children will not be returning, to assist the school with future planning.
- 19.2 Schools are advised to develop a re-registration form to be completed by the parents or guardians of all currently enrolled learners
- 19.3 Completion of **re-registration form** must not be used as a process to exclude or expel learners who are viewed to be poor performing, problematic, or ill-disciplined.
- 19.4 The re-registration process for currently enrolled learners plays a critical role in enabling the school to plan appropriately and make space available for the admission of new learners.
- 19.5 Re-registration forms must be issued and returned within the timeframe specified in the 2026 Provincial Learner Admission Management Plan.

20 MAIN APPLICATION STEPS FOR LEARNER ADMISSION

- 20.1 You are required to register your child at the school closest to your place of residence between Monday, 26 May 2025, and Thursday, 31 July 2025.
- 20.2 Ensure that all required supporting documents are submitted together with the completed application form.
- 20.3 Upon submission of the application package, you must obtain an **Application Submission Number** from the school for reference purposes.
- 20.4 Between 18 August 2025 and 30 September 2025, the school is expected to notify parents or guardians of the outcome of their application.
- 20.5 If your application is unsuccessful and you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may lodge a formal complaint with the Circuit Office responsible for the school.

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20.6 Please note that, depending on the volume of applications received, some applicants may receive admission outcomes as early as August 2025.

21 UNSUCCESSFUL LEARNER ADMISSION APPLICATIONS

- 21.1 Schools processing learner admission applications must compile and maintain a list of both successful and unsuccessful applications
- 21.2 All schools are required to capture records of unsuccessful admission applications. Each applicant whose application is unsuccessful must be provided with a written notification, indicating that the application was not successful. These applicants must also be placed on a waiting list, which must be submitted to the Circuit Office.
- 21.3 Every public school is expected to electronically capture and submit an electronic list of admitted learners, as well as those placed on the waiting list. Unsuccessful applicants must be categorized according to the four approved criteria and allocated a waiting list number, based on the date of submission of the application.
- 21.4 The waiting list must be submitted to the Circuit Office together with the admission list, both categorized by grade.
- 21.5 The Circuit Manager must ensure that consideration is given to the applicant who meet the first criteria, immediately after receiving the waiting list from the school.
- 21.6 Upon receipt of the waiting list from the school, the Circuit Manager must prioritise applicants who meet the first criterion outlined in the admissions policy.
- 21.7 The Circuit Manager or her/his delegate must upon receipt of the waiting list from the school immediately begin with the placement process for learners on the waiting list without delay.
- 21.8 The school Principal must inform parents by 30 September 2025 whether the application is successful or not. (**See attached Management Plan for 2025 Learner Admission**)
- 21.9 School Principals are required to notify parents or guardians of the outcome of their application—whether successful or not—by no later than **30 September 2025**. (Refer to the attached 2025 Learner Admission Management Plan.)
- 21.10 Should an applicant or parent choose to decline either an admission offer from a school or a placement offer made by the Circuit Manager, they must inform the relevant school or circuit office as soon as possible. This will enable the institution to offer the available space to another learner.

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22 PROCESS AND PROCEDURE TO HANDLE GRIEVANCE

- 22.1 If your application is unsuccessful, the school is required to provide written reasons for the non-admission of your child, along with the contact details of the Circuit Manager. This will enable you to lodge a grievance with the Circuit Manager within fourteen (14) days of receipt of reasons for non-admission should you not be satisfied with the reasons provided. The Circuit Manager will respond within fourteen (14) days from the date of receipt of the grievance.
- 22.2 Your grievance will be addressed within fourteen (14) working days of submission.
- 22.3 District and Circuit offices are encouraged to establish grievance registers to record all submissions in order of receipt. These registers must include the reasons for each grievance and ensure that all cases are handled within the timeframe stipulated in paragraph 20.2.
- 22.4 Should the grievance remain unresolved, the parent or applicant may escalate the matter to the District Director. The Director must address and resolve the grievance within fourteen (14) working days.
- 22.5 If the District Director does not resolve the grievance to your satisfaction, you have the right to refer the matter to the Head of Department through the Institutional Governance Directorate within 14 days. The Head of Department will respond within fourteen (14) working days.
- 22.6 If you remain dissatisfied with the response from the Head of Department, you are advised to lodge an appeal with the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education within fourteen (14) days of the notification of refusal. The MEC will respond within fourteen (14) working days.
- 22.7 In all instances, escalation to a higher authority should occur only if the matter has not been addressed within the prescribed period or if you are dissatisfied with the response provided. It is important to first exhaust all remedies at the immediate or lower level before approaching a higher office.
- 22.8 While engaging with the offices mentioned above, you are encouraged to continue seeking placement for your child at other schools within the area.
- 22.9 Parents lodging a grievance or appeal must ensure that they provide full personal details, including contact numbers and residential as well as work addresses.

23 PLACEMENT OF LEARNERS

- 23.1 The Department of Education is obligated to ensure the placement of all children of compulsory school-going age.

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- 23.2 To fulfil this mandate, the Department will ensure that learners are placed in schools where space is available.
- 23.3 Schools are required to submit to the Circuit Office a list of all learners who cannot be admitted. The Circuit Office will facilitate the placement process based on the criteria outlined in Paragraph 16 of the Admission Requirements, within a reasonable timeframe.
- 23.4 Should the Circuit Manager be unable to place the learners within twenty (20) days, the District Director will intervene and assume responsibility for facilitating their placement.
- 23.5 If the District Director also fails to place learners within a reasonable timeframe, the Head of Department, through the Institutional Governance Directorate, will take over the responsibility of facilitating learner placement.
- 23.6 The Provincial Office, through the Institutional Governance and Learner Support Sub-directorate, will provide continuous monitoring and support to districts in managing the learner placement process.
- 23.7 Where feasible, reasonable efforts will be made to place learners at schools located near their places of residence.
- 23.8 The placement of learners who applied but not admitted by schools, will take place from **October to November 2025 as per the 2026 Provincial Learner Admission Management Plan**. This process will be coordinated from the Circuit level up to the Provincial level, in line with the **2026 Provincial Learner Admission Management Plan**.

24 LEARNER PLACEMENT DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR

- 24.1 Principals are advised that, from time to time during the academic year, the Department may place learners in their schools. These placements involve learners who, due to circumstances beyond their own control, their parents' control, or even the Department's control, have had to relocate from one place of residence to another.
- 24.2 Learner placement during the year may occur as a result of, but not limited to, the following circumstances:
- 24.2.1 Relocation of the learner's family to a different geographical area;
- 24.2.2 The need to provide support to a learner from a dysfunctional family environment.

- 24.2.3 Placement of a learner who has committed an offence at a public or independent school, as part of a behavioral rehabilitation and correctional intervention;
- 24.2.4 The need to protect a learner from any form of maltreatment, including sexual abuse, neglect, physical abuse, or emotional abuse;
- 24.2.5 Placement of a learner in a public school during or after being placed in a Child and Youth Care Centre (e.g., temporary safety, children's home, secure care Centre) or a correctional facility, as ordered by a court of law;
- 24.2.6 Reintegration of a learner into a public-school following release from alternative care arrangements such as foster care, temporary safety, children's homes, or secure care centres.
- 24.2.7 An overaged learner who is enrolled in a public or registered in independent school and who relocates due to circumstances beyond their control shall be accommodated and placed in a suitable educational setting, regardless of age.

25 ADMISSION AND MANAGEMENT OF LEARNERS FROM SECURE CARE CENTRES AND CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

- 25.1 Learners placed in secure care centres or correctional facilities have a constitutional right to access basic education. The Department of Basic Education bears the responsibility for ensuring that this right is protected.
- 25.2 Some learners may not be eligible for removal from secure care or correctional centres due to the nature of the offence committed and the conditions set by a court of law. In such cases, the learners must be linked to the nearest public school for the purpose of completing formal academic assessments.
- 25.3 The formal academic tasks referred to above must be administered, marked, and recorded by the school with which the learner is officially linked.
- 25.4 The principal of the school identified for such linkage is required to cooperate fully with officials from the secure care or correctional facility to facilitate the educational programmes of the learner.
- 25.5 The learners eligible for the services described herein are those of compulsory school-going age, as well as those who were enrolled in public schools prior to their placement in a secure care centres or correctional facility.

- 25.6 The age limit for learners who may remain in secure care or correctional centres while continuing their education under this arrangement is twenty-one (21) years.
- 25.7 District Directors and Circuit Managers are responsible for ensuring that learners in secure environments are adequately supported and provided with access to quality education.
- 25.8 In cases where learners are placed in a new location due to circumstances beyond their control and were unable to complete the formal assessment tasks for a particular term, the receiving school shall evaluate the learner based on the formal tasks they were able to complete prior to relocation.
- 25.9 The above-mentioned paragraph is intended to safeguard the rights of children, as enshrined in Section 29 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, which affirms every child's right to education and protection in all circumstances.

26 DE-REGISTRATION OF LEARNERS FROM HOME EDUCATION

- 26.1 A parent intending to de-register a learner from home education in order to enroll her or him in a public school must submit the following documents along with the application:
- 26.1.1 A letter of registration bearing the learner's official registration number.
- 26.1.2 A withdrawal letter signed by the Head of Department where the learner was registered.'
- 26.1.3 A certificate of registration containing the Provincial Education Department registration number.
- 26.1.4 The learner's portfolio of evidence.
- 26.1.5 Certified copies of annual assessment reports for each grade completed under home education, including an external assessment report compiled by a competent assessor.
- 26.2 The District Director must establish an **Education Evaluation Team (EET)** consisting of officials from the Curriculum Advisory Services Unit, Inclusive Education Unit, Institutional Governance Unit, and the Circuit Manager of the affected school.
- 26.3 The **EET** shall be co-chaired by the Chief Education Specialists for Curriculum and Institutional Governance. The Inclusive Education officials shall provide secretariat support to the team.

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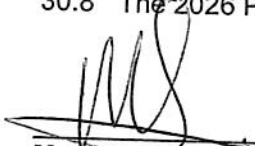
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30 CONCLUSION

- 30.1 It is essential that we work collaboratively to ensure that no child is unjustly excluded from public schools, particularly in urban areas where space is limited.
- 30.2 We call upon all stakeholders to contribute positively towards the transformation of our communities. The non-admission of a learner should not be interpreted through a racial lens.
- 30.3 In cases where an application is unsuccessful, the school will inform the applicant and provide the reasons for non-admission.
- 30.4 We urge all affected parents and guardians to respond promptly and to adhere to the prescribed timelines for learner registration. This will help prevent avoidable misunderstandings and the spread of unfounded accusations.
- 30.5 School principals are required to ensure that the information contained in this circular and the 2026 Provincial Learner Admission Management Plan is disseminated to all parents, legal guardians, and caregivers of school-aged children.
- 30.6 The Limpopo Department of Education will closely monitor the admission process to minimize instances of unfair discrimination.
- 30.7 We strongly encourage all parents to register their children for school admission in accordance with the outlined procedures, in order to prevent avoidable conflicts.
- 30.8 The 2026 Provincial Learner Admission Management Plan is attached hereto


Mashaba KM
 Acting Head of Department

16th May 2025
 Date