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To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors (Head Office and district offices),
Circuit Managers, Principals and Chairpersons of governing bodies

Short summary: *This serves to inform ordinary public schools of the time frames for applications for admission to Western Cape Education Department schools and the management of school admission information for 2023/2024.*

Subject: Dates and time frames for applications for admission to ordinary public schools and the management of school admission information for 2023/2024

1. The demand for learning placement at schools in the Western Cape continues to grow annually. In order to manage admissions effectively, schools are required to adhere to the time frames listed in this document.
2. The measures outlined in this circular apply to applications received in **2023** for admission to ordinary public schools in **2024**.
3. The dates set out in this circular allow the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to plan more efficiently for the provision of classrooms, staff establishments, the procurement of Learning and Teaching Support Material and all other systemic interventions required to ensure that schools are ready on the first day of schools reopening.
4. **Online Admissions System**
 - 4.1 The Online Admissions System has been fully implemented.

- 4.2 Many parents and organisations have raised concerns about schools compelling parents to complete additional hard copy or other online application forms and/or requiring the submission of additional information which is unlawful or in contravention of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act), 2013 (Act 4 of 2013). This includes information relating to the ability of the parent to pay school fees or personal and behavioural information.
- 4.3 This circular therefore confirms that the **administration** of admissions for 2024 must be done on the official WCED School Admissions Management Information (SAMI) system and schools may therefore NOT use their own hard copy, online forms or systems, or request any additional information from parents not in line with the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), the *Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools*, published in *Government Gazette* No. 19377 of 19 October 1998, or the POPI Act.

5. Admission time frames

- 5.1 Schools are required to adhere to the following WCED admission time frames which will be **applicable to all ordinary public schools ONLY**:

2023/2024 DATES	ACTIVITY
14–16 February 2023	Schools complete and sign off automated planned enrolment on the Online Admissions System.
21–23 February 2023	Circuit managers verify and sign off automated planned enrolment on EduInfoSearch.
PHASE 1 – SCHOOL PLACEMENT	
13 March 2023	School admissions open (all ordinary public schools).
14 April 2023	School admissions close (all ordinary public schools).
17 April – 19 May 2023	Schools process applications.
24 May 2023	Principals finalise and sign off all application statuses on the Online Admissions System.
26 May 2023	Circuit managers sign off all online admission statuses on the EduInfoSearch.
29 May 2023	System displays the outcome of all applications.
29 May – 02 June 2023	Parents are informed of the outcome per email/SMS.
29 May – 19 June 2023	Parents confirm acceptance.
PHASE 2 – SCHOOL/DISTRICT PLACEMENT	
19 June – 31 July 2023	Schools fill available places.
20 June, until placement is concluded.	Parents are informed of places. Parents must accept and confirm places within three days .
PHASE 3 – DISTRICT PLACEMENT	
31 July 2023 – Admissions conclusion.	WCED resolves and places unplaced learners in consultation with schools.
After progression and promotion is signed off.	Schools confirm enrolment.

- 5.2 The application process takes place in three phases.
- 5.2.1 In phase one, as per the table on page 2, parents apply, and schools resolve placement.
- 5.2.2 In phase two, district officials and schools resolve placement.
- 5.2.3 In phase three, district officials resolve placement.
- 5.3 As the accountable officer, the **principal** must sign off the status of applications on the Online Admissions System on **24 May 2023, as the successful status of an application cannot be reversed after the outcome has been published (29 May 2023) and parents notified.**
- 5.4 **Schools may not deviate from the time frames given.**
- 5.5 **Schools who do not adhere to the time frames, will be dealt with in terms of WCED procedure.**
- 5.6 **Schools MAY NOT inform parents of the outcome of their application status before it is displayed on the Online Admission System.**
- 5.7 Schools may not ask parents to confirm before the due date as parents have the right to wait until all schools have notified them of the outcome of the application.
- 5.8 If parents do not confirm final acceptance by this date and time, the Online Admissions System will automatically allocate the first successful offer from a school on the list.
- 5.9 If parents do not confirm acceptance by **19 June 2023**, schools may offer such places to learners on the waiting list or to other learners who still need placement.
- 5.10 As applications are processed, the Online Admissions System generates a list of unplaced learners and indicates which schools have places available.
- 5.11 It is therefore vital that schools ensure that their planned enrolment is correct and that applications are processed by the due dates to ensure that officials have accurate information, which will be used to inform parents of the available places.
6. **Application process**
- 6.1 Only learners of a compulsory school going age whose parents are applying for a place in Grade 1 and Grade 8 are classified as new applications to a school.
- 6.2 All other applications must be captured as transfers.

- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that they have secured a place for the learner at another school before transferring the learner out of a school.
- 6.4 Schools are requested to make every effort to empower parents to apply on the Online Admissions System by assisting in the following ways:
- 6.4.1 Governing bodies could allow parents to access and use the computer lab under supervision in controlled conditions where the risk to the school is very low.
- 6.4.2 Reliable and trustworthy parents, teachers, administrative staff, interns or computer literate Grades 7–12 learners could volunteer to assist parents with the online application process.
- 6.5 In cases where internet access is unavailable, parents may access the internet at public libraries, hand in their applications directly to schools or request assistance from the district office.
- 6.6 Parents who approach schools directly for assistance may not be turned away. There have been allegations made in court that parents were turned away by the support staff. Schools are required to assist all parents with admissions queries. All queries (telephonic, emails, walk- ins) related to admissions must be captured on the admission system. The school must record the name, surname, and contact details of the parent as well as the name, surname and CEMIS/Identity Document number of the learner.
- 6.7 Schools must give parents the **learner admissions form** which must be captured on the system on behalf of the parent. Parents must be informed that the completed admissions form handed back does not automatically guarantee a space at the school if the school has no available spaces as per the planned enrolment.
- 6.8 Schools and district officials are strongly advised to acknowledge any communication received from parents and to act on any query within 10 school days.
- 6.9 All interaction must be captured on the SAMI system.
- 6.10 Parents are strongly advised to apply to more than one school. This will ensure that parents have another possible option if their school of choice does not have a place.
- 6.11 Parents are required to indicate their order of preference on the Online Admissions System. This eliminates the blocking of places which delays the finalisation of admissions on an annual basis. Schools are not able to see the learners' preference.
- 6.12 Parents must use the following website address, <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za> to make their final choice. This website can be accessed from any device that can access the internet, such as laptop computers, tablets and even smartphones.

- 6.13 All applications, whether captured by the parent or handed in to the school, **MUST** be captured and processed on the Online Admissions System.
- 6.14 Schools must prioritise applications submitted during the official application time frame.
- 6.15 Please be advised that in the case of an admissions appeal, dispute or a legal challenge, schools may be required to provide the details of an application, such as when and how the application was processed. Any details needed to resolve a dispute, will then be taken from the official WCED admissions information database.
- 6.16 Schools are reminded that parents can check the status of their application on the Online Admissions System at any time. It is therefore very important for schools to ensure that the correct outcome is displayed on the system.
- 6.17 Schools and districts **MUST** capture ALL late applications received.

7. **Parents confirming acceptance and submitting supporting documents**

- 7.1 Parents must confirm acceptance of their final choice before **00:00** on **19 June 2023**. If parents do not confirm final acceptance by this date and time, the Online Admissions System will automatically allocate the first successful offer from a school on the list.
- 7.2 Parents can confirm acceptance in the following ways:
- a) confirming directly on the Online Admissions System.
 - b) signing and submitting a confirmation letter/reply slip directly to the school; or
 - c) contacting their nearest district office.
- 7.3 The school must upload all confirmation letters/reply slips, which were submitted to them, on the Online Admissions System before 00:00 on 19 June 2023.
- 7.4 Parents must upload copies of the supporting documents required onto the Online Admissions System when they apply.
- 7.5 After 19 June 2023, parents must hand in certified copies of supporting documents to the school where the learner's confirmation of acceptance was submitted or confirmed for 2024. This must be done within **seven school days** after confirmation of acceptance.
- 7.6 Governing bodies have the right to reject applications if parents submit false/untrue information or fraudulent documents.
- 7.7 After confirmation of acceptance by parents, schools may proceed to offer places which are open to learners on the waiting list or other learners who still need places.

8. **Resolving cases where learners have not secured a place at a school**

8.1.1 Learners applying for the following year to a school who are already in a school are not unplaced.

8.1.2 Cases where learners still need a place are referred to as "**placement in progress**".

8.1.3 The relevant district officials charged with admissions administration will have access to the lists of unplaced learners, and the available places at schools in the district. These officials will be required to assist in resolving the placement of learners by liaising with schools in their respective districts and circuits.

8.2 **Official procedure for a parent requesting assistance for placement**

8.2.1 Schools still have until the third term to fill all available places. WCED officials are also in the process of finding and securing places for learners. The WCED will intervene and place the remaining learners, in consultation with schools in the 4th quarter, if they are still not placed.

8.2.2 In the meantime, we advise that parents do the following:

- a) Continue to write to or stay in touch with the top 2 or 4 schools on your list.
- b) Provide reasons why the school should reconsider your application.
- c) Keep record of all communication.
- d) Stay in touch with our office so that we know that you still need assistance. Also let us know if your case has been resolved.
- e) Your last step in the process is to write a letter of appeal to the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education, which is your right, as per the SASA.
- f) If it is clear that there has been any discrimination or there was a substantial administrative error, you may appeal to the MEC.
- g) The WCED cannot guarantee places at schools of choice.

8.3 **Parents who have not applied on the system**

8.3.1 Parents who have not applied on the system need to contact the nearest district office.

8.3.2 Parents must complete and submit the WCED application form, including all the required documentation, to the district office.

8.3.3 In addition, the WCED has identified schools in each suburb or town who will be able to assist the parent in the case where the parent is unable to access the internet or get to the district office.

8.3.4 The parents can obtain the names of these identified schools from schools nearest to where they live.

9. **Advocacy programme**

9.1 The WCED will embark on a full advocacy programme which will include various media formats and platforms to inform the public.

9.2 This will include print media, posters, pamphlets, print advertisements as well as radio and applicable social media platforms.

9.3 Top-up information and training sessions on the SAMI system will be held for officials and school admissions staff during October to November 2023. Details of these sessions will follow.

10. In light of the increased demand for places at schools, the WCED trusts that these measures will assist schools and parents. We wish to thank principals, governing bodies and officials for their support in placing all learners in schools.

11. All queries in respect of admissions can be directed to the Head: Management and Governance or the relevant circuit manager in each district.

12. Kindly bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all concerned.

SIGNED: HA LEWIS

ACTING HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 2022-09-14