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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: *Dates and time frames for applications for admission to ordinary public schools and the management of school admission information for 2024/25.*

Subject: Dates and time frames for applications for admission to ordinary public schools and the management of school admission information for 2024/25

1. The demand for learner 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 circular.
2. The measures outlined in this circular apply for Grades R, 1 and 8 applications as well as transfer requests received in **2024** for admission to ordinary public schools in **2025**.
3. The following common dates for admission 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. Only learners of compulsory school-going age whose parents are applying for a space in Grades R, 1 or 8 are classified as new applications to a school.
5. All other applications (Grades 2–7 and 9–12) are classified as transfer requests.

6. School Admissions Management Information (SAMI) system

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 This circular, therefore, confirms that the **administration** of admissions for 2025 must be done on the official WCED SAMI system and schools may NOT use their own hard copy or online forms/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.
- 6.3 The WCED has obtained a legal opinion which confirms that the Head of Education is permitted to administer admissions via an online system or through the WCED's own hard copy application forms.
- 6.4 It was further confirmed that the Head of Education may stipulate what information may be requested to accompany admission applications and what information may not be requested.

7. Online admission application time frames

7.1 Grades 1 and 8 ONLY

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

2024/25 DATES (GRADES 1 AND 8 ONLY)	ACTIVITY
14–16 February 2024	Schools complete and sign off automated planned enrolment on the SAMI system.
21–23 February 2024	Circuit managers verify and sign off automated planned enrolment on EduInfoSearch.
PHASE 1 – PARENT APPLICATION	
11 March 2024	Grades 1 and 8 school admissions open (all ordinary public schools).
12 April 2024	Grades 1 and 8 school admissions close (all ordinary public schools).
15 April – 17 May 2024	Schools process Grades 1 and 8 applications.
22 May 2024	Principals finalise and sign off Grades 1 and 8 application statuses on the SAMI system.

27 May 2024	Circuit managers sign off all Grades 1 and 8 online admission statuses on EduInfoSearch.
29 May 2024	System displays the outcome of Grades 1 and 8 applications.
29 May – 03 June 2024	Parents are informed of the outcome per email/SMS.
29 May – 14 June 2024	Parents confirm acceptance of Grades 1 and 8 placements.
PHASE 2 – SCHOOL PLACEMENT	
14 June – 31 July 2024	Schools fill available Grades 1 and 8 spaces.
15 June until placement is concluded	Parents are informed of spaces. Parents must accept and confirm placement within three days .
PHASE 3 – DISTRICT PLACEMENT	
31 July 2024 – admissions conclusion	WCED resolves and places unplaced learners in consultation with schools.
After progression and promotion is signed off	Schools confirm enrolment.

7.2 Grade R ONLY

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

2024/25 DATES (GRADE R ONLY)	ACTIVITY
PHASE 1 – PARENT APPLICATION	
01 August 2024	Grade R school admissions open (all ordinary public schools).
16 August 2024	Grade R school admissions close (all ordinary public schools).
17 August 2024 – 04 September 2024	Schools process Grade R applications.
06 September 2024	Principals finalise and sign off Grade R application statuses on the SAMI system.
10 September 2024	Circuit managers sign off Grade R online admission statuses on EduInfoSearch.
17 September 2024	System displays the outcome of Grade R applications.
17 – 19 September 2024	Parents are informed of the outcome per email/SMS.
17 – 30 September 2024	Parents confirm acceptance of Grade R placements.
PHASE 2 – SCHOOL PLACEMENT	
01 – 18 October 2024	Schools fill available spaces.
01 October 2024 until placement is concluded	Parents are informed of spaces. Parents must accept and confirm placement within three days .

PHASE 3 – DISTRICT PLACEMENT	
19 October 2024 – admissions conclusion	WCED resolves and places unplaced learners in consultation with schools.
After progression and promotion is signed off	Schools confirm enrolment.

8. Transfer requests

8.1 A transfer request is defined as a request by a parent for a learner requiring a space in Grades 2–7 or Grades 9–12.

8.2 Due to a very high demand for spaces, the WCED will only consider transfer requests in the case of relocation. Learners in exit grades or serious cases will be considered by the circuit manager.

8.3 Procedure (hard copy) for transfer requests (Grades 2–7 and Grades 9–12)

8.3.1 Please note that parents **will no longer be able to capture an application for a transfer** on the SAMI system themselves.

8.3.2 Parents will have to complete a hard copy **transfer request form** and submit the completed form with the supporting documents to the school of their choice or their nearest district office.

8.3.3 Schools will only be able to capture requests where a parent wishes the learner to transfer to that school.

8.3.4 Districts will be able to capture transfer requests for multiple schools.

8.4 Transfer request time frames (schools and districts ONLY)

Transfer requests are applications for Grades 2–7 and Grades 9–12.

2024/25 DATES (TRANSFERS: GRADES 2–7 AND 9–12)	ACTIVITY
PHASE 1 – SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS ONLY	
01 August 2024	System opens for schools and districts to capture transfer requests on the SAMI system (all ordinary public schools).
16 August 2024	System closes for schools and districts to capture transfer requests on the SAMI system (all ordinary public schools).
17 August 2024 – 04 September 2024	Schools process transfer requests.

06 September 2024	Principals finalise and sign off transfer request statuses on the SAMI system.
PHASE 2 – SCHOOL PLACEMENT	
01 – 18 October 2024	Schools fill available spaces.
01 October 2024 until placement is concluded	Parents are informed of spaces. Parents must accept and confirm placement within three days .
PHASE 3 – DISTRICT PLACEMENT	
19 October 2024 – admissions conclusion	WCED resolves and places unplaced learners in consultation with schools.

- 8.5 The transfer request process takes place in three phases:
- (a) In **phase one**, as per the table above, schools or districts will capture the transfer request and schools resolve placement.
 - (b) In **phase two**, schools and district officials resolve placement.
 - (c) In **phase three**, district officials resolve placement.

9. Application process

- 9.1 As the accountable officer, the **principal** must sign off the status of applications on the SAMI system on **22 May 2024 (Grades 1 and 8) and 06 September 2024 (Grade R and transfers)**, **as the successful status of an application cannot be reversed after the outcome has been published and parents notified.**
- 9.2 **Schools MAY NOT deviate from the time frames given.**
- 9.3 **Schools MAY NOT inform parents of the outcome of their application before it is displayed on the SAMI system.**
- 9.4 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 outcomes of their applications.
- 9.5 If parents do not confirm final acceptance by the due date and time, the SAMI system will automatically allocate the first successful offer from a school on the list.
- 9.6 If parents do not confirm acceptance by **14 June 2024 (Grades 1 and 8) and 30 September 2024 (Grade R and transfers)**, schools may offer such spaces to learners on the waiting list or to other learners who still need placement.
- 9.7 The SAMI system generates a list of “placement in progress” (unplaced) learners and indicates which schools have spaces available as applications are processed.
- 9.8 It is therefore vital that schools ensure their planned enrolment is correct and that applications are processed by the due dates to ensure that officials have accurate information. This will be used to inform parents of the available spaces.

- 9.9 It is parents' responsibility to ensure that they have secured a space for a learner at another school before transferring the learner out of a school.
- 9.10 Schools are requested to make every effort to empower parents to apply on the SAMI system by assisting in the following ways:
- (a) 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.
 - (b) Reliable and trustworthy parents, educators, administrative staff, interns or computer literate Grades 7–12 learners could volunteer to assist parents with the online application process.
- 9.11 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.
- 9.12 Parents who approach schools directly for assistance with admissions may not be turned away.
- 9.13 All enquiries (telephonic, email, walk-ins) related to admissions must be captured as notes on the learner's application profile on the SAMI system by school staff and district officials.
- 9.14 Schools must give parents a **WCED learner admissions form** which must be captured on the system on behalf of the parent.
- 9.15 In the case of a transfer request, schools must give parents a **WCED transfer request form** which must be captured on the system on behalf of the parent.
- 9.16 Schools and district officials must acknowledge any communication received from parents and must act on any enquiry within 10 school days.
- 9.17 All interactions with parents/guardians/caregivers or their representatives must be captured on the SAMI system.
- 9.18 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 space.
- 9.19 Parents are required to indicate their order of preference on the SAMI system. This eliminates the blocking of spaces which delays the finalisation of admissions on an annual basis. Schools are not able to see learners' preferences.
- 9.20 Parents must use the following website address, <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za> to apply and 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.

- 9.21 All applications, whether captured by the parent or handed in to the school, **MUST** be captured and processed on the SAMI system.
- 9.22 Schools must prioritise applications submitted during the official application time frame.
- 9.23 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.
- 9.24 Schools are reminded that parents can check the status of their application on the SAMI system at any time. It is therefore very important for schools to ensure that the correct outcome is displayed on the system.
- 9.25 Schools and districts **MUST** capture ALL late applications received.

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

- 10.1 Parents must confirm acceptance of their final choice before **00:00 on 14 June 2024 (Grades 1 and 8) and 30 September 2024 (Grade R and transfers)**. If parents do not confirm final acceptance by this date and time, the SAMI system will automatically allocate the first successful offer from a school on the list.
- 10.2 Parents can confirm acceptance in the following ways:
- (a) confirming directly on the SAMI system;
 - (b) signing and submitting a confirmation letter/reply slip directly to the school; or
 - (c) contacting their nearest district office.
- 10.3 The school must upload all confirmation letters/reply slips which were submitted to them on the SAMI system **before 00:00 on 14 June 2024 (Grades 1 and 8) and 30 September 2024 (Grade R and transfers)**.
- 10.4 Parents must upload copies of the supporting documents required onto the SAMI system when they apply.
- 10.5 Parents must be informed that a completed admissions form handed to a school does not automatically guarantee a space at the school if the school has no available spaces as per the planned enrolment.
- 10.6 **After 14 June 2024 (Grades 1 and 8) and 30 September 2024 (Grade R and transfers)**, parents must hand in certified copies of supporting documents to the school where the learner's confirmation of acceptance was submitted or confirmed for 2025. This must be done within **seven school days** after confirmation of acceptance or on a date determined by the school.

10.7 Governing bodies have the right to reject applications should parents submit false/untrue information or fraudulent documents.

10.8 After confirmation of acceptance by parents, schools may proceed to offer open spaces to learners on the waiting list or other learners who still need placement.

11. **Resolving cases where learners have not secured a space at a school**

11.1 Learners who are already in a school and are applying for the following year to a different school are not considered unplaced.

11.2 Cases where learners still need a space for the following year are referred to as "**placement in progress**".

11.3 The relevant district officials charged with admissions administration will have access to the lists of unplaced learners and the available spaces 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.

11.4 **Official procedure for a parent who did not apply during phase 1**

11.4.1 The parent/guardian/caregiver **MUST**:

- (a) contact their nearest district office for assistance;
- (b) complete and submit the WCED online application form; and
- (c) submit certified, legible copies of the required documents to the district office.

11.4.2 Parents who are unable to get to the district office, may go to their nearest school for assistance.

11.4.3 Parents must be informed that a completed admissions form handed in to a school does not automatically guarantee a space at the school.

11.4.4 The WCED cannot assist parents if they have not adhered to the above procedure.

11.5 **Official procedure for a parent whose applications to schools were all unsuccessful**

11.5.1 **Before 31 July 2024 (Grades 1 and 8) and before 18 October 2024 (Grade R and transfers)**

- (a) The parent must first engage with the school to try to resolve placement.
- (b) Parents are advised to do the following before 31 July 2024 (Grades 1 and 8) and before 18 October 2024 (Grade R and transfers):
 - (i) Write to the school(s) asking them to reconsider their decision and motivate/provide reasons why the application(s) should be reconsidered.
 - (ii) Stay in touch with the school(s) on their list. Keep a record of all communication.
- (c) **Please note that the WCED cannot assist with or guarantee spaces at schools of choice.**

- 11.5.2 **After 31 July 2024 (Grades 1 and 8) and after 18 October 2024 (Grade R and transfers)**
- (a) WCED officials will start the process of finding and securing spaces for learners.
 - (b) Where learners are still unplaced, the WCED, in consultation with schools, will intervene during the third and fourth terms to place the learners.
12. **Admission appeals to the Provincial Minister of Education**
- 12.1 Appeals to the Provincial Minister of Education, in terms of section 5(9) of SASA, will open for **Grades 1 and 8** applications on **01 August 2024**.
- 12.2 Appeals to the Provincial Minister of Education, in terms of section 5(9) of SASA, will open for **Grade R applications and transfer requests** on **01 October 2024**.
13. **Advocacy programme**
- 13.1 The WCED will embark on a full advocacy programme which will include various media formats and platforms to inform the public.
- 13.2 This will include print media, posters, pamphlets, print advertisements as well as radio and applicable social media platforms.
- 13.3 Top-up information and training sessions on the SAMI system will be held for officials and school admissions staff during January to February 2024. Details of these sessions will follow.
14. Principals will be held accountable in instances where schools do not adhere to the requirements stipulated in this circular and may face disciplinary action if it is found that the provisions of this circular have been ignored or circumvented.
15. All queries in respect of admissions can be directed to the Head: Management and Governance or the relevant circuit manager in each district.
16. Kindly bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all concerned.

SIGNED: B WALTERS
HEAD: EDUCATION
DATE: 2023-12-19