



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: Provincial/District Admissions Coordinators
Reference: L2.1.1.1.4
Date: April 2026

CHIEF DIRECTORS
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES
PRINCIPALS AND PARENTS

CIRCULAR NUMBER: 11 /2026

MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER ADMISSIONS TO ORDINARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Northern Cape Department of Education (NCDoE) regards early enrolment as a priority for the commencement of a successful academic year.
- 1.2 The optimal utilisation of teaching time during an academic year is essential for sound academic performance. It is therefore important that learners are enrolled well in advance of the commencement of the 2027 academic year.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this Circular is to:

- a) Inform School Principals, School Governing Bodies, parents/guardians, and District Offices on the administration of Online Learner Admissions in all ordinary public schools in the Northern Cape Province for the 2027 academic year;



- b) Communicate that the Online Admissions Application Period will be implemented as follows:
 - i. Entry Grades (R, 1 and 8): 20 April 2026 at 09:00 – 29 May 2026 at 23:59;
 - ii. Middle Grades (Grades 2–7 and 9–11): 01 September 2026 at 09:00 – 30 October 2026 at 23:59;
 - c) Confirm that the Online Learner Admissions System will be open for applications for Grades R to 11;
 - d) Meet the objectives of the Bill of Rights as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996);
 - e) Facilitate the process of children entering school for the first time and those starting high school in a timely, efficient, and coordinated manner;
 - f) Ensure the lawful administration of learner admissions and registration in schools;
 - g) Enable effective teaching and learning to commence on the first day of the school year and successive school terms; and
 - h) Align admission processes to ensure uniformity within the Northern Cape Province.
- 2.2 The NCDoe intends to utilise the Online Admissions System in future to further strengthen the management of admissions across all grades.
- 2.3 Applications must be submitted via the Northern Cape Department of Education Online Learner Admissions System at www.ncdoeadmissions.org.

3. **STATUS**

- 3.1 This circular replaces Circular 10 of 2025.
- 3.2 This Circular will remain in force until withdrawn or replaced by the Office of the Head of Department.

4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This Circular must be read in conjunction with

- (a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996);
- (b) Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act No. 3 of 2000);
- (c) South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996) as amended;
- (d) Admissions Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (Government Gazette No. 19377 of 1998);
- (e) Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (2001);
- (f) Northern Cape Schools Education Act (Act No. 6 of 1996);
- (g) Norms and Standards for Language Policy in Public Schools (GN 665 in GG 18887 of 1998);
- (h) National Education Policy Act, 1996;
- (i) Refugees Act, 1998 (Act No. 130 of 1998);
- (j) Aliens Control Act, 1991 (Act No. 96 of 1991);
- (k) Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002); and
- (l) Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013).

5 ADMISSION OF LEARNERS TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

5.1 In terms of Section 5(1) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended, a public school must admit and provide education to learners without unfair discrimination.

Subsection 5 (1) as amended states:

(1A) Any learner whose parent or guardian has not provided any required documents, whether of the learner or such adult person acting on behalf of the learner, during the application for admission, shall nonetheless be allowed to attend school.

(1B) The principal of the school must advise the parent or guardian to secure the required documents.

Subsection 5 (5) of SASA as amended and any applicable provincial law states, the admission policy of a public school is determined by the governing body of such school in line with the Constitution and relevant legislation.

The governing body, when considering the admission policy or any amendment thereof for approval, must be satisfied that the policy or the amendment thereof takes into account the

needs, in general, of the broader community in the education district in which the public school is situated.

The governing body must review the admission policy determined in terms of this section every three years or whenever the situation has changed when circumstances so require, or at the request of the Head of Department.

- 5.2 In terms of Section 5(7) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended, an application for admission of a learner to a public school must be made in a manner determined by the Head of Department.

The HoD may delegate the responsibility to admit learners to a departmental official as per SASA, Section (62)(2).

- 5.3 In terms of Section 5(8) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended, where an application is refused, the parent or guardian must be informed. SMS notification shall be deemed sufficient for this purpose.

- 5.4 The School Principal is responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable legislation and policies governing learner admissions.

6. ADMISSION AND THE AGE REQUIREMENTS TO ORDINARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

6.1 Compulsory education

- 6.1.1 In terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996, as amended, every parent must ensure that a learner attends school from the year in which such learner turns six (6) years old until the learner reaches the age of fifteen (15) years or completes Grade 9, whichever occurs first.

6.2 Compulsory school attendance for admission

- 6.2.1 Compulsory school attendance age for Grade R is for learners aged five turning six (5-6) in the year of admission.

- 6.2.2 Admission to Grade 1 is for learners aged six turning seven (6-7) in the year of admission.

- 6.2.3 Failure by a parent or guardian to ensure that a learner attends school may constitute an offence in terms of applicable legislation.

- 6.3 The system excludes Special Schools. Admission to such schools remains the responsibility of the District Director.

6.4 STANDARDISED APPLICATION PROCEDURES

6.4.1 Parents are required to apply to more than one school, particularly when applying to high-demand schools. Placement is subject to availability. In areas where only one school is reasonably accessible, parents may apply to that school only.

6.4.2 Parents must log on to the NCDoe Online Learner Admissions website at www.ncdoeadmissions.org and follow the process outlined on the system.

6.4.3 Parents are not required to apply online if their child is already enrolled at a school offering the next grade. Such learners will automatically be accepted by the school and provisionally placed in the relevant higher grade, subject to the final results of the 2026 academic year. This provision applies only where the learner is progressing normally within the same school.

Notwithstanding the above, the following exceptions apply:

- a) Learners currently enrolled in Grade RR progressing to Grade R must apply online;
- b) Learners transferring to another school must apply online;
- c) Learners requiring reallocation through the admissions system must apply online.

6.4.4 The application process consists of three steps:

- (a) Parent/guardian registration;
- (b) Learner profiling;
- (c) Application submission.

Parents must complete all three steps for the application to be regarded as complete. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete application.

6.5 Required documentation:

All required documents must be uploaded within 7 days of making the application. The uploading of documents will be done through the NCDoe Online Admission Application System. Schools will be able to access those uploaded documents from the system.

6.5.1 South African citizens:

- a) A copy of the Parent/Legal guardian ID (or sworn affidavit in a case where the parent / legal guardian does not have an identity document);
- b) Proof of Home Address (A Municipal Account in the name of the parent with the home address used during application; or A legal lease agreement between the tenant and the owner of the property/Landlord; or A registered Municipal informal settlement name);
- c) A valid South African Birth certificate (Abridged or Unabridged) of the learner or an affidavit or a sworn statement;
- d) Clinic Card / Proof of immunization (Grade R and 1);
- e) The most recent learner progress report
- f) Transfer/relocation supporting document (middle grade only)
- g) Where either or both parents are deceased, the relevant death certificates

6.5.2. Non-South African citizens:

6.5.2.1 Parents of the learner who are foreign nationals with permanent residence permits or temporary residence visas:

- a) Learner's foreign issued birth certificate;
- b) Learner's passport;
- c) Study visa or permanent residence permit issued to the learner by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA);
- d) Parents' passports;
- e) Parents' temporary residence visas or permanent residence permits issued by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA);
- f) Proof of Home address (A Municipal Account in the name of the parent with the home address used during application; or A legal lease agreement between the tenant and the owner of the property / Landlord; or A registered Municipal informal settlement name)
- g) Proof of immunization (Gr R and 1); and
- h) The most recent learner progress report.
- i) Transfer/relocation supporting document (middle grade only)

6.5.2.2 Parents of the learner who are refugees or asylum seekers:

- a) Parent's Asylum Seeker or Refugee Visa issued by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA);
- b) Learner's Asylum Seeker or Refugee Visa issued by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA);
- c) Learner's Birth Certificate if the learner was born in the Republic;

- d) Where Asylum Seeker Visas are provided, a Refugee or long term Study Visa must be provided within three years of admissions of the learner;
- e) Proof of Home address (A Municipal Account in the name of the parent with the home address used during application, A legal lease agreement between the tenant and the owner of the property / Landlord, or A registered Municipal informal settlement name);
- f) Proof of immunisation (Gr R and 1); and
- g) The most recent learner progress report.
- h) Transfer/relocation supporting document (middle grade only)

6.5.2.3 Learners in alternative care must submit the relevant court order granting guardianship or custody, together with the learner's unabridged birth certificate, in accordance with Act 32 of 2024 (Section 1(n)(d)(i)–(ii)).

6.6 It is advisable for parents to have the required documentation with them when they submit their online applications, especially those who will be visiting our walk-in centres, as this will allow for a seamless process.

6.7 Section 59 (3) of SASA, as amended, states:

If, when applying for admission to a public school or for exemption from the payment of school fees, the parent of a learner, or any other person— submits or provides information which he or she knows to be:

- (i) false or misleading;
- (ii) forged;
- (iii) a document and claims that it is a true copy of the original when in fact it is not a true copy.

Such person is guilty of an offence and liable, upon conviction, to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 12 months, or to both a fine and such imprisonment.

6.8 A learner who is sixteen (16) years or older and who has never attended school must be advised and referred to the respective District Office for immediate placement at an Adult Education and Training Centre.

7. FEEDER ZONES

The Head of Department, after consultation with representatives of governing bodies, may determine feeder zones for ordinary public schools, in order to control the learner numbers of schools and coordinate parental preferences. The Head of Department has not done so for

the Northern Cape. As a result, there are no feeder zones and therefore no feeder schools in the Northern Cape Province.

8. LEARNER ADMISSION CRITERIA- Gr R to 11

- 8.1 If the applicant learner(s) already has (have) a sibling attending the school of application in the year of submission (sibling means a learner who has at least one parent who is also the parent of the learner already attending that school).
- 8.2 If the place of residence of the applicant learner(s) is in the same suburb as the school applied to;
- 8.3 If the place of residence (residential suburb) of the applicant learner(s) is adjacent to the suburb of the school applied to;
- 8.4 Applicant learner(s) whose parent/guardian is an employee at the school applied to;
- 8.5 If places remain after all the above-mentioned applicants have been offered places, other applicants, in the order of the position of the application, will be considered. (Availability of space)
- 8.6 The above-mentioned directives regarding the criteria shall not apply to special schools, technical schools, agricultural schools, schools of skill, or industrial schools.
- 8.7 Learners applying for admission due to transfer or relocation from another province, country, or district must provide the required supporting documentation.
- 8.8 Learners applying under other categories, including Grade 9 or Grade 10 entry grade applications, must provide the required supporting documentation.

9. UNLAWFUL PRACTICES

The Principal of a school is responsible for ensuring that these or any other illegal practices do not take place at a school.

- 9.1.1 The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Section 5(3) determines that no learner may be refused admission to a public school on the grounds that his or her parent:
 - (i) is unable to pay or has not paid the school fees determined by the governing body;
 - (ii) does not subscribe to the mission statement of the school; or
 - (iii) has refused to enter into a contract in terms of which the parent waives any claim for damages arising out of the education of the learner.

9.2 Testing of Learners

9.2.1 In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Section 5(2), the **governing body** of a public school may not administer any test (**including an interview**), related to the admission of a **learner** to a public school, or direct or authorize the **Principal** of the school or any other person to administer such test.

9.3 Registration fees, deposits, administration fees, admission fees, school fees

9.3.1 The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Section 39(5), determines that **no school may charge any registration, administration or other fee at the time of application. School fees, if applicable, may only be charged after the learner has been admitted to the school.**

9.4 Academic Performance

9.4.1 Schools may not use the academic performance of learners to determine admission to a school.

9.5 Sport or Cultural Achievements

9.5.1 Schools may not use sport or cultural achievements (like representation at provincial or national level) of learners to determine admission to a school.

9.6 Interviews

9.6.1 Schools must not use the process of interviewing parents or learners prior to the admission of the learner as a screening mechanism for admission.

9.7 Unpaid school fees

9.7.1 The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Section 5(3) (a), stipulates that no learner may be refused admission to a public school because his/her parent has not paid the school fees.

9.8 **Disciplinary Record and Confidential Report of the learner**

9.8.1 When a learner **has applied for admission to a school**, neither the governing body of that school nor any person employed at that school may request the learner's current school or any person employed at that school, to furnish it with a **disciplinary record or a confidential report** in relation to that learner. **Requesting and/or issuing a disciplinary record or a confidential report to another school during the admissions period will be regarded as misconduct.**

10. **NEW APPLICATIONS ABOVE THE AGE NORM**

10.1 In cases where a learner is three years older than the norm age per grade, the principal, in consultation with the Circuit Manager, will seek direction from the Head of Department or a delegated official whether the learner will be admitted to that grade. Admission to a school will only be allowed if written consent is received from the Head of Department or delegated authority.

11. **APPLICATIONS FOR RE-ADMISSION OF LEARNERS FROM HOME EDUCATION TO AN ORDINARY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

11.1 A parent who wishes to de-register his/her child from a home education programme in order to register his or her child into a public school, must request and complete a withdrawal letter received from the Institutional Development unit at the NCDoe to ensure that the child is removed from the home education data list and to prevent a situation where the child is registered twice (no learner should be registered twice).

11.2 Parents are required to submit the following documents when applying to a public school:

11.2.1 The certificate of registration which reflects the NCDoe registration number of the learner;

11.2.2 The learner's portfolio of evidence;

11.2.3 Certified copies of the annual assessment reports of the relevant grade from when the learner was registered for home education to the last grade the learner completed, including external assessment reports completed by competent assessors.

11.3 The District Director must establish a team to evaluate the documentation and decide on the correct grade for placement by the relevant officials. The team must comprise of the relevant experts.

12. LATE APPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Late applications must be done online when the NCDOE opens the system for this purpose. Late applications will only be considered after all on-time applications have been processed and will be subject strictly to the availability of space.
- 12.2 **Parents should note that their child(ren), shall be accommodated where school places exist, but not necessarily at the nearest school to the learner's place of residence or the school of their choice.** The system will automatically place a learner at a school that has available space for the grade applied for once the application for admission is fully completed on the system.

13. TRANSFERS AND RELOCATIONS

- 13.1 Parents, who are relocating or transferring, seeking admission to grades R, 1, and 8 must apply online at www.ncdoeadmissions.org as a normal application during the admission period.
- 13.2 Transferring/relocating parents applying to middle grade/s (Grade 2 – 7 and Grade 9 – 11), must apply on the Online Admission System as a normal application during the middle grade admission period.
- 13.3 Parents should note that their child(ren) shall be accommodated where school places exist, but not necessarily at the nearest school to the learner's place of residence or the school of their choice.

14. DECENTRALISED ONLINE WALK - IN CENTRES

- 14.1 The NCDoe has established decentralised walk-in centres to support parents who are without internet access or sufficient resources to complete an online application.

14.2 Admission Call Centre

The department has established an admission call centre, which is already operative. This is not a walk-in centre but a Call Centre. The following telephone numbers may be used to contact the provincial call centre

Contact number:

- 053 874 7012/64
- 053 874 7161/89
- 053 874 7239/92

Email addresses:

- admissionsqueries@ncdoe.school.za

15. APPEALS TO THE MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (MEC)

15.1 In terms of Section 5(9) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, any learner or parent of a learner who has been refused admission to a public school may appeal against the decision to the Member of the Executive Council within **14 days** of receiving the notification of the refusal of admission to the public school.

15.2 In terms of SASA, Section 5(9) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended, the Member of the Executive Council must, within **14 days** after receiving such an appeal, consider and decide on the matter and inform the learner or the parent of the learner of the outcome of the appeal.,

15.3 Appeals for Grades R, 1 and 8 must be submitted via the Online Admissions System.

15.4 Appeals for grades R, 1 and 8 will be administered online by providing the following information:

- a) Reference number or ID number of the child for whom the appeal is made
- b) The school to which the appeal is made
- c) Provide reasons for your appeal based on the criteria.
- d) Application outcome from the NCDoe Online Learner Admissions System.

16. MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LEARNER ADMISSIONS

The following Management Plan shall apply:

NO	ACTIVITY	TIME –FRAME
1	Entry grade application period	20 April 2026
2	Entry grade applications close	29 May 2026
3	Placement/ progress notifications	31 July 2026
4	Appeals period	August 2026
5	Middle grade applications open	01 September 2026
6	Middle grade applications close	30 October 2026
7	Middle grade placement notifications	27 November 2026

17 CONCLUSION

- 17.1 All Circuit Managers, Principals, and relevant officials are required to ensure strict compliance with this Circular and to actively support the implementation of the Online Admissions System in line with the prescribed timelines and procedures.
- 17.2 The NCDoe online system provides a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section with answers to guide and support all users.
- 17.3 The successful implementation of this Circular will contribute to improved planning, equitable access to education, uniformity in admissions processes, and the effective commencement of teaching and learning at the start of the academic year.
- 17.4 The NCDoe remains committed to strengthening the management of learner admissions through the continued development and utilisation of the Online Admissions System across all grades.

17.3 Should any uncertainty prevail as to any aspect of this **instruction** you may contact the **Provincial/District Admissions Team Coordinator** for further clarity at:

Provincial Office:	Admissions Team Coordinator	Contact Details:
	Ms. Z. Hopley	053 839 6661/6803
District Office:	Admissions Team Coordinator:	Contact Details:
Frances Baard	Mr. T. Daniels	053 830 1644/5/7/8
John Taolo Gaetsewe	Mr. D.J. Disang	053 773 9626
Namakwa	Ms E. Smit	027 718 8735
Pixley ka Seme	Ms. P. De Bruyn	053 632 9286
Z.F. Mgcawu	Mr. R. Van Zyl	054 339 0079

YOURS IN EDUCATION



DR. M.I. ISHMAIL

ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION

DATE: 10.04.2026