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CIRCULAR NO. 24 OF 2025

**TO: DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBs)**

CIRCULAR NO. 24 OF 2025 ON LEARNER ADMISSIONS FOR THE 2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

1. Admission Policy Thrust

- 1.1. The Regulations Relating to the Admission of learners in Public Schools, published in the Provincial Gazette No. 3149 on the 3rd of April 2020 referred as Official Notice No.1 of 2020, prescribes the admission of learners in public ordinary schools that fall under the jurisdiction of the Mpumalanga Department of Education.
- 1.2. Every Public School should comply with the school's admission policy in line with the school's circumstances and context.
- 1.3. Act No. 32 of 2024: Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, 2024 (BELA), regulates admission of learners and policies need to be read together with this Act.
- 1.4. **BELA Articulates amongst others the following in relations to learner admission:**
 - 1.4.1. "Subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, every parent must cause every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend school, starting from grade R on the first school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of six years and not leaving school until the last school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of 15 years or will complete grade nine, whichever occurs first."
 - 1.4.2. In terms of Section 5 "(1) A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way.";
 - 1.4.3. "(a) The admission age of a learner to a public school to grade R is age four turning five by 30 June in the year of admission: Provided that, if a school has limited capacity for admission in grade R, preference must be given to learners who are subject to compulsory attendance.";
 - 1.4.4. "(a) 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, and must take into account factors including, but not limited to:
 - i. the best interests of the child, with emphasis on equality as provided for in section 9 of the Constitution, and equity;
 - ii. whether there are other schools in the community that are accessible to learners;
 - iii. the available resources of the school and efficient and effective use of state resources
 - iv. the space available at the school for learners.

- (b) the Head of Department, after consultation with the governing body of the school, has the final authority, subject to subsection (9), to admit a learner to a public school; and
- (c) the governing body must review the admission policy determined in terms of this section every three years or whenever the factors referred to in paragraph (a) have changed when circumstances so require, or at the request of the Head of Department.”;

2. Duration of the admission period

- 2.1. Admissions commences on 02 May 2025 and closes on 31 August 2025.
- 2.2. All schools should inform prospective learners for apply or confirm return to the schools for the 2026 academic year.
- 2.3. Grades R; 01 and 8 learners seeking admission for 2026 need to apply starting from May until end of August 2025.

3. Learner Admission Data and Accountability

- 3.1. Principals of public schools must keep learner admission registers and also capture all learners’ information in the SA-SAMS.
- 3.2. The required learner data must be correct and verified for purposes of accuracy, authenticity, reliability and validity.
- 3.3. The template for capturing learner admission data should updated and submitted to the circuit for consolidation at the end of May 2026 and subsequent data need to be submitted every fortnight until the 31st August 2025.
- 3.4. No official or a school should turn away learners who seek admission without taking their particulars and verifying their legibility for admission.
- 3.5. Discrimination of the basis of colour, gender, creed or language is strictly prohibited.

4. Admission of undocumented learners to all public schools

- 4.1. Prospective learners require documents like birth certificates, identity documents, study permits, passports, proof of residence, etc. to be admitted at school, however children without the required documents must not be denied admission given their constitutional right to education.
- 4.2. In the event a parent, guardian or caregiver is unable to provide the required documents (like birth certificates, identity documents, study permits, passports, proof of residence, etc.) the principal of the school must accept alternative proof of such in an affidavit or a sworn statement signed by the parent, care-giver/guardian of the learner concerned wherein the learner’s required details are fully identified and indicated.
- 4.3. The learner shall nonetheless be allowed to attend school and the principal must advise the parent or guardian to secure the required documents.
- 4.4. The parent, care-giver/guardian must indicate processes being undertaken to secure or obtain required documents.

4.5. Basic information to be captured

- 4.6. During the process of admission of learners without documentation, principals are expected to capture relevant information such as:
 - 4.6.1. The name of parent, guardians or caregiver their Identity numbers.
 - 4.6.2. The residential address of parent, guardian or caregiver.
 - 4.6.3. The contact details work, (postal and residential or physical addresses, home and work telephone and cellphone numbers, next of kin etc.) of parents, guardians or caregivers.
 - 4.6.4. A relative of the parent or guardian or caregiver who can be contacted or reached by the school in case the parent, guardian or caregiver cannot be traced or are unavailable at the time of need or during an emergency.
- 4.7. The above information should be compiled and submitted to the Circuit Office for the attention of the District Director for further handling.

5. Admission in Special Schools

- 5.1. Learners admitted in Special Schools are those who experience barriers to learning and require moderate to high levels of support in respect of highly-specialised support resources, personnel, programmes and facilities.
- 5.2. Placement of learners with special educational needs must be done after implementing the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy (**SIAS-2014**) by the relevant District- Based Support Team. The Head of Education Department for Mpumalanga Province need to consider the placement of such identified learners.
- 5.3. Parents are urged to submit all relevant supporting documents such as medical report, psychological report etc.

6. Admissions of grade R learners in ECD Centres and primary schools

- 6.1. The child must be 4 and half year old, turning 5 years on the 30th June of the same year of admission.
- 6.2. Applications for admission in Grade R should be accompanied by the following documents:
 - 6.2.1. Birth Certificate,
 - 6.2.2. Road to health card (Clinic Card) and
 - 6.2.3. ID Copies of parents
- 6.2.4. Where practically possible, primary schools are urged to admit grade R learners.

7. Admissions of learners in Grade 1

- 7.1. The child must be 5 and half year old, turning 6 years on the 30th June of the same year of admission.
- 7.2. Applications for admission in Grade 1 should be accompanied by the following documents:
 - 7.2.1. Birth Certificate,
 - 7.2.2. Road to health card (Clinic Card) and
 - 7.2.3. ID Copies of parents

8. Admissions of Grade 8 learners

- 8.1. Primary schools within the feeder zone must submit a list of learners in grade 8 to the feeder secondary schools.
- 8.2. Secondary schools need to issue application forms for admission to their feeder primary schools to enable grade seven (7) learners to apply.
- 8.3. Parents, care-giver/guardian must submit application forms to the prospective secondary school.
- 8.4. No assessments are expected to be administered to learners who are applying for admission of be preferred on the basis of their performance as every learner has a right to education.
- 8.5. Learners whose parents changed residence or relocated should be considered for placement in line with their current residential address.

9. School feeder zone for admission

- 9.1. The preference order of admission is firstly, for learners whose parents live in the feeder zone, in their own domicile or their employer's domicile.
- 9.2. Learners who live within the feeder zone of a school are categorised under list "A". A feeder zone, is a zone within the same area, town or village.
- 9.3. List "B" is for learners that are outside the feeder Zone.
- 9.4. A learner who lives within the feeder zone of school A must be referred to the neighbouring school B if school A is oversubscribed. If school B is oversubscribed, an alternative school within a reasonable distance must be found by the Head of Department or officials delegated such as, Chief Director District Coordination and Management, District Director, Circuit Manager or any relevant official working with admission committees.
- 9.5. Feeder zones need not only be geographically proximity of schools, but other factors like language, curricula offered, accommodation capacity and hostel facilities should also be considered.
- 9.6. A school with a specific field of study, e.g. a technical school, must have much larger feeder zones to accommodate learners with specific aptitudes, interests or needs.
- 9.7. A learner living outside feeder zone is not precluded from seeking admission at whichever school he/she chooses, however, access to school of choice cannot be guaranteed.
- 9.8. The department reserves the right to conduct physical verification of the school capacity and it only the Head of Department or delegated official who may declared that a school has reached its full capacity.

10. Health and Safety Measures

Schools are expected to implement safe and hygienic measures for processing admissions that include issuing and receiving of application forms.

11. Establishment of Admission Committees

- 11.1. Schools must establish Admission Committees to provide guidance and administrative to ensure that learner admissions are well-managed. School admission committees need to be functional and guided by the management plan for 2026 to ensure that learner admissions are managed efficiently.
- 11.2. Circuit admission committees need to be chaired by Circuit Managers and constituted by representatives of principals for both primary and secondary schools and SGBs.
- 11.3. District admission committees must to be Chaired by the District Director and constituted by District Management Team and Circuit Managers, especially from the high pressure/Hotspot areas. The circuit coordinator plays a central coordinating role.
- 11.4. District admission committee need to include EMIS, Labour, Circuit Coordination, Communications, Teacher Development & Governance, HR section, Infrastructure and other relevant units as per invitation by the district director. The districts receive consolidated circuit reports and update the provincial committee on a fortnight basis.
- 11.5. Provincial Committee are chaired by the Chief Director: District Coordination and Management and constituted by Teacher Development & Governance, Communications, EMIS, Infrastructure, HRM and Finance and other relevant units. The provincial committee receives reports from the district and support the districts to ensure that to ensure that encountered challenges are addressed. Progress on admission is reported to DBE on an ongoing basis.

12. 2026 Learner Admission Management Plan for the Public Schools

- 12.1. The 2026 Learner Admission Management Plan is outlined below.
- 12.2. Schools are expected to customise their admission plan in line with the attached 2026 Learner Admission Management Plan.

13. MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2026 ADMISSIONS OF LEARNERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NO	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
13.1.	Admission of current learners / Early Registration		
13.1.1	Learners currently enrolled schools start with re-registration	School Principal	02 May 2025
13.1.2	Statistics of current learners who re-registered finalized and statistics submitted to District	School Principal and circuit coordinators	30 May 2025
13.2.	Admission of new learners		
13.2.1	Head Office, District and Circuit Offices set up help desks and Admission Committees	Head: Education	02 May 2025
13.2.2	Distribution of applications for admission forms	School Principal	02 May 2025
13.2.3	Submission of application forms with all required documentation.	Parents/Guardian or Caregivers	02 May to 30 Aug 2025
12.3.	Management of Admission Waiting Lists		
13.3.1	Schools submit copies of Admission Waiting List A (those from the feeder zone) and Admission Waiting List B (those from outside the feeder zone) to the Circuit and District.	School Principal	15 Sept 2025
13.3.2	The waiting lists must be issued with an admission Waiting List Number on the principle of 'first come first served.'	School Principal	15 Sept 2025

NO	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
13.3.3	District Directors check the waiting list from schools in line with available spaces and approve the waiting lists.	District Director and Circuit Manager	22 Sept 2025
13.3.4	Schools receive approved admission waiting lists A for placement from the District Director.	District Director and Circuit Managers	30 Sept 2025
13.4.	Placement of learners by schools in waiting list approved by the District Director		
13.4.1	Schools receive approved admission waiting lists B for placement from the District Director.	School Principal and Circuit Manager	15 Oct 2025
13.4.2	Letters to parents on the admission waiting lists.	School Principal and Circuit Manager	30 Oct 2025
13.5.	Management of late Registrations 2026 for new learners		
13.5.1	Districts and circuits admission committees attend to late applications for placement.	Districts and Circuits	08 Jan 2026
13.5.2	Late admissions application placements stats consolidated.	Schools/Circuits and Districts	12 Jan 2026
13.5.3	Late applications and learners on waiting lists are attended on case-by-case basis.	School Principals and circuit managers	16 Jan 2026
13.5.4	Districts manage the placement of all late applications for admissions and submit daily statistics to Head Office	District Director	19 Jan 2026
13.5.5	Ten (10) days stats submitted and also uploaded	School Principals	28 Jan 2026
13.5.6	PPN adjusted in line with Ten (10) days stats	EMIS	20 Feb 2026

Your cooperation is always highly appreciated.



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(A)HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 29 APRIL 2025