



**SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT
OIREACTAS**

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**EDUCATION - ADMISSION TO
SCHOOLS BILL 2013**

IPPN Support Office
November 2013

1. IPPN welcomes in principle of the heads for the above Bill. In particular it supports Head (3) which states that an admission policy of a school cannot discriminate in relation to the admission of pupils.

2. We also support Head (9) which empowers the National Educational Welfare Board and the National Council for Special Education to designate a school. IPPN wishes to go further and request as a matter of urgency that the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 is fully commenced.

3. IPPN would also support the thrust of Head (11) which requires cooperation between schools in relation to the operation of enrolment policies.

4. IPPN wishes to convey its deep concern and reservations in relation to the proposal to amend Section 23(2) of the 1998 Education Act. The proposed substitution under Head (6) is to make the school principal responsible for the carrying out of the admission process including making decisions on individual applications.

Whilst IPPN recognises that the school principal plays a central role in the application process this proposal shifts the ultimate responsibility of refusing admission onto his/her shoulders rather than allowing the Board of Management to do under the existing system.

5. The principal would have to defend all decisions in appeals to the Board of Management. This would result in a significant increase in workload and responsibility. It must be highlighted that two thirds of our membership have fulltime teaching responsibilities along with discharging the role of school principal.

6. IPPN wishes to caution that under the proposed new appeal mechanisms Head (7) that a disappointed parent will have an option to judicially review decisions of individual Boards of Managements. IPPN request that the Department of Education and Skills would indemnify Boards of Management in relation to such possible actions.

7. IPPN requests that funding is made available to offer continuing professional development to school principals to operate the provisions of the Bill.

8. IPPN wish in particular to support the requirements under Head (4) of the Bill that the Act prescribes that the admission policy of a school shall provide for an offer of enrolment to be made to all students seeking admission save in circumstances:

9. Where the number of students seeking admission is greater than the number of places

- ❖ In accordance with Section 7 of the Equal Status Act 2000
- ❖ Where the student or his or her parents do not agree to confirm in writing that the schools Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code
- ❖ Where An Garda Síochána or the Health Service Executive has provided in writing to the school its opinion that the admission of the student could have a serious effect on the safety of other students and or staff of the school.

We wish to thank the Chairperson, Deputy Tuffy and her committee for taking the time to read this submission. We are available if requested to discuss our submission at your hearings.

Contact

Seán Cottrell
National Director
IPPN Support Office
1890 21 22 23
0866478717
info@ippn.ie