



## education

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**TO: District Directors  
Circuit Coordinators  
Circuit Managers  
Institutional Development Services Officials  
Inclusive Education Officials  
School Principals  
School Governing Bodies  
School Governing Body Associations**

#### DEPARTMENTAL CIRCULAR 06 OF 2026

#### SUBJECT: LEARNER REGISTRATION FOR 2027

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended (SASA), Chapter 2, section 3 makes provision for compulsory attendance for learners. Section 3 (1) mandates that every parent or guardian of a learner of school-going age is responsible for ensuring that the learner attends school from first until the last day of the school year. This must take place until the learner reaches the age of 15 years or completes the ninth grade of schooling.

The North West Department of Education emphasises that the learner registration should be concluded before the 2027 academic year begins. This will enable schools to be ready with resources and informed plans which will allow the smooth operation of school systems at the start of the academic year.

**Learners including out of school children with disabilities and from care centres must be registered at any conveniently situated public school, provided that space is available at the school. Learners with disabilities and those in care centres must not wait for admission but must be immediately admitted to any school in their communities.**

Learners residing near the school should be given first preference.



## DEPARTMENTAL CIRCULAR OF 2026: LEARNERS REGISTRATION FOR 2027

The choice of school by parents or guardians for their children depends on the availability of space at the school. Schools are requested to fill in the template provided to indicate school capacity. Only the Head of Department can confirm and declare when the school is full. The template must be submitted to Circuit Coordinator by 30 May 2026.

This communicate applies to learners being registered for the first time and to learners changing schools. All schools need to have admission policies which are in line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (No. 108 of 1996), SASA, Circular 1 of 2020, Phakamisa Judgement and any applicable provincial law. Schools are also encouraged to establish admission committees, review their admission policies, develop admission management plans and strategies to assist the process. These must be correctly implemented to serve learners' educational needs without discrimination.

Schools are not permitted to administer any admission tests before admitting learners. SASA does not provide for pre-Grade R; therefore, schools should refrain from introducing such grade. The North West Department of Education will not take any responsibility for pre-Grade R learners admitted to public schools. Furthermore, no under-aged learners are allowed to be admitted into Grade R classes.

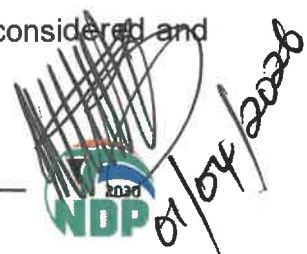
Schools are also not allowed to charge fees for application forms or registration of learners. Departmental officials will manage and monitor the learners' admission process. All registration enquiries and school admission statistics should be collated by the districts and reported to the director on monthly basis.

### LEARNER ADMISSION PROCESS

#### 1. Registration date

Learner registration and admission of all grades will begin 08 April 2026 and end 30 September 2026. Learner admission will be conducted on a first-come-first-served basis for all who meet the admission requirement as set out in SASA.

Parents or guardians are responsible for registering their children before the closing registration date. Late registration will begin after the formal closing date for learner registrations in October 2026. Only special and exceptional cases will be considered and finalised prior to the reopening in January 2027.



## **2. Application period**

Schools should make admission application forms available parents, guardians and learners from 08 April 2026. School Principals and School Governing Bodies must inform parents and guardians that enrolment has begun and that application forms are available. Parents and guardians are encouraged to return the application forms not later than June 2026, to allow schools to admit, register learners and prepare feedback for parents. Applications forms which are not returned to schools by 30 June 2026 will not be considered.

All applications received should be registered and processed by 30 September 2026. Schools must provide parents and guardians with written responses of acceptance or non-acceptance by 30 October 2026, to allow time to find alternative placement if necessary.

## **3. Waiting list**

Schools should compile lists of learners who have not been placed and submit these lists to circuit offices. Until 30 October 2026, circuit managers will process alternative placements for learners to schools where space is available. Lists of learners who remain unplaced will be forwarded to district directors for further placement.

## **4. Age requirements**

As determined by Section 5(4)(a) of SASA, the admission age of learners to public schools is as follows:

- Grade R: 4 years turning 5 years by 30 June 2027
- Grade 1: 5 years turning 6 years by 30 June 2027
- Other grades: Learners younger than 15 years must be placed in a suitable grade. Those who are older than 16 years are advised to register at an adult education centre. This clause exempt learner who was already admitted before 1 January 2000.
- Learners with special needs should be admitted, where it is reasonably practicable, to ordinary public schools, special schools and full-services schools.



**5. Documents required for learner registration:**

- Certified copy of birth certificate
- Immunisation card
- Most recent school academic report card
- Transfer letter or card from previous school
- In addition to the documents stated above, where applicable, learner's study permit or work permit from Department of Home Affairs for non-SA citizens
- Temporary or permanent residence permit, or proof of application for such a permit from the Department of Home Affairs, to legalise the presence of non-SA citizens in the country. (The learners' residence status in the republic should comply with Immigration Act and in and Refugees Act of South Africa.)

Schools may provisionally register undocumented learners and request parents to ensure that they obtain relevant documents as one of the learner registration requirements and South African Constitutional rights. If parents are unable to produce such documents for their children, schools are required to bring the matter to the attention of the Head of Department for consideration and intervention. The school's admission register and SA-SAMS must show a record of all confirmed learner admission at the beginning of the year. It is important for the school to update parents' details. Departmental officials must have access to the school's admission register.

**6. Administration of late application**

The department has established the Provincial Admission Task Teams and Registration Hubs to deal with the late applications and registrations at the beginning of the 2027 academic year. All late admissions should be referred to circuit coordinators in order to direct the applicants to identified schools within the proximity that have available space and which offer the relevant curriculum.

**7. Appeals procedure**

It is nationally mandated that all learners of school going age are admitted to schools and that their rights to education are protected. Parents or guardians experiencing difficulty in enrolling their children for 2027 may approach circuit managers for assistance.



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Contact details can be obtained from schools. Parents or guardians have the right to request reasons, in writing, for the non-admission of a child. If these reasons are considered unsatisfactory, the parent or guardian may lodge a written complaint with the district office and ultimately with the office of the Superintendent General. If still unsatisfied, the parent or guardian may appeal against the decision to the Member of the Executive Council.

### 8. Admission refusal reasons

All learners must be admitted to the total school programme. Although the admission policy of a school is determined by the School Governing Body, a learner may not be refused admission on the following grounds:

- Parents or guardians are unable to pay, or have not paid, the school fees determined by the School Governing Body under section 39 of SASA
- Parents or guardians do not subscribe to the mission statement of the school
- Parents or guardians refuse to enter into a contract in terms of which the parent or guardian waives any claim for damages arising from the education of a learner
- Language, culture, disability, race, religion and economic background
- HIV status of learner, disability or pregnancy
- Any other learners' status

### Admission process of learners to special schools

Admission of learners to Special Schools is guided by:

- Section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which states that everyone has a right to a basic education.
- Subsection 3(1) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 provides for compulsory school attendance for learners aged 7-15 (ninth grade).
- Subsection 3(2) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 states that the Minister must, by notice in the Government Gazette, determine the ages of compulsory attendance at school for learners with special education needs.
- Subsection 3(3) states that the Member of the Executive Council must ensure that there are enough school places so that every child who lives in his or her province can attend school as required by subsections (1) and (2).



## DEPARTMENTAL CIRCULAR OF 2026: LEARNERS REGISTRATION FOR 2027

Section 12(4) of the SASA encourages that learners with disabilities be enrolled in public ordinary schools. This section places obligation on the Provincial Education Departments to ensure that adequate support is provided in public ordinary schools. This minimises the influx of learners to special schools. Only learners who require high level of support are to be admitted at special schools.

The White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System acknowledges that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth needs support which is offered through the Screening, Identification, Assessment Support (SIAS) policy of 2014.

According to SIAS policy, it is prerogative of Inclusive Education Sub Directorate at the Provincial Office in consultation with the District Based Support Team (DBST) to facilitate and finalise admission of learners to Special Schools.

Educators at school level will screen all learners during admission and report findings on the Learner Profile. Learners identified as experiencing learning barriers will be supported by the educator and when support is unsuccessful, Support Need Assessment 1 form (SNA 1) will be filled, to refer them to the School Based Support Team (SBST) in consultation with the educators who will develop an Individual Support Plan (ISP) for the learner.

In case the needs of learner are not met at their current School, SBST will fill in SNA 2 to request support from the DBST. The DBST will assess the learners' needs and develop an Action Plan for the school or for the learner.

In case the learner has High Level Support Needs, that cannot be supported at their current school, DBST will fill in SNA 3 and (Department of Basic Education) DBE Form 123 B to request assistance from the province for learner to be admitted to a Special School.

The District Director will recommend application by signing Form DBE 123 B. The parent of the learner should be consulted and if he agrees, consent will be given by signing Annexure A1 DBE form 123 A. The Provincial Based Support Team will consider application, then determine the type of school in line with the learners' needs and approve the application by allocating Learner with Special Educational Need (LSEN) Number.



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For learners with High Level Support Need, e.g. Deaf, Blind or Autistic (etc.) who have never been to school, application should be done by the parent at the District Education Office (Inclusive Education Unit). The following documents should be submitted: Birth Certificate of the learner, Medical Records, Identity Documents of the parents and Form DBE 126. Application of learners with special needs should be done six months prior to admission (August of current year).

The following District Directors play a vital role in the learner admissions and registrations:

Office	Director	Contact Number	e-mail address
Provincial office	Ms B.G. Moeng	060 980 6466	<a href="mailto:BMoeng@nwpg.gov.za">BMoeng@nwpg.gov.za</a>
Ngaka Modiri Molema District	Ms M. E. Lesetedi	071 630 1244	<a href="mailto:ELesetedi@nwpg.gov.za">ELesetedi@nwpg.gov.za</a>
Dr Kenneth Kaunda District	Ms N.M. Seokolo	082 884 6423	<a href="mailto:NSeokolo@nwpg.gov.za">NSeokolo@nwpg.gov.za</a>
Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District	Ms M.V. Dithejane	053 928 0200	<a href="mailto:dithejanem@nwpg.gov.za">dithejanem@nwpg.gov.za</a>
Bojanala District	Dr L.F. Ntwape	014 590 4800	<a href="mailto:Ntwape@nwpg.gov.za">Ntwape@nwpg.gov.za</a>

The contents of this circular must be brought to the attention of responsible officials, and all schools should adhere to the time frames as indicated.



MR LENGANE BOGATSU  
SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

DATE: 01/04/2026



## MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2027 LEARNER ADMISSIONS

ITEM	ACTIVITY	Time Frame	RESPONSIBILITY
1.	2026 Learner Admission Department Circular to be communicated and mediated to all affected, departmental officials, School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies and Associations.	01 April 2026	Communication Directorate
2.	MEC on air to advocate learner registration, <b>including out of school children with disabilities and from care centres</b> (Circular S28 of 2023 on Placement of Out of school children in schools) (You FM and Local Radio Station).	May - 30 September 2026	IDS, LSSS & Communication
3.	Road show to advocate learner registration, including <b>out of school children with disabilities and from care centres</b> (Circular S28 of 2023 on Placement of Out of school children in schools).  Communication letters indicating the opening and closing of admission dates are distributed to parents, reflecting admission requirements and documentation.	April - 30 September 2026	Communication Directorate QLTC IDS LSSS Districts
4.	Submission of template to establish schools' capacity to Circuit Coordinators.	30 May 2026	Schools
5.	Submission of consolidated report on school capacity to Infrastructure Directorate.	30 May 2026	Circuit Coordinators



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6.	Verification of school capacity.	31 July 2026	Infrastructure Directorate
7.	Set up plan for overcrowding speculated.	31 August 2026	Infrastructure Directorate
8.	Submission of application forms.	01 April – 30 June 2026	Parents/Legal Guardians
9.	Processing application forms	July – September 2026	Schools
10.	Identification of hotspot and mitigation plans	31 July 2026	Districts Admission Hubs
11	Responding to parents/ guardian on the application outcome	12- 30 October 2026	Schools
12.	Submission of waiting list to circuit managers	30 October 2026	Schools
13.	Identification of alternative schools	November 2026	Circuit Managers
14	Placement of learners to alternative schools	November 2026	Circuit Managers
15.	Application of learners with high level support needs for special schools should be done six months prior to admission (July of current year).	July 2026 of current year (for 2027)	Parents and departmental officials

