

File no.: 27/9/P

Reference: 20260122-38

Circular: 0002/2026

Expiry date: 31 December 2027

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 2026/27.*

Subject: Dates and time frames for applications for admission to ordinary public schools and the management of school admission information for 2026/27

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 to Grades R, 1 and 8 applications as well as transfer requests received in **2026/27** for admission to ordinary public schools in **2027**.
3. This circular must be read in conjunction with Circular 0053/2021, dated 09 March 2022, Circular 0059/2021, dated 08 October 2021, and Circular 0018/2022, dated 30 March 2022 and the Western Cape Education Department(WCED) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for late applications.
4. The following common dates for admission allow the 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.
5. Only learners of compulsory school-going age whose parents/guardians/caregivers are applying for a space in Grades R, 1 or 8 are classified as new applications to a school.
6. All other applications (Grades 2–7 and 9–12) are classified as transfer requests.

7. School Admissions Management Information (SAMI) system

- 7.1 Many parents/guardians/caregivers and organisations have raised concerns about schools compelling parents/guardians/caregivers 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 (POPI) Act, 2013 (Act 4 of 2013). This includes information relating to the ability of the parent/guardian/caregiver to pay school fees or personal and behavioural information.
- 7.2 This circular, therefore, confirms that the **administration** of admissions for 2027 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/guardians/caregivers 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.
- 7.3 The WCED has obtained a legal opinion which confirms that the Head of Education (HOD) is permitted to administer admissions via an online system or through the WCED's own hard copy application forms.
- 7.4 It was further confirmed that the HOD may stipulate what information may be requested to accompany admission applications and what information may not be requested.

8. Online admission application time frames – Grades R, 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**:

2026/27 DATES (GRADES R, 1 AND 8 ONLY)	ACTIVITY
11–13 February 2026	Schools complete and sign off automated planned enrolment on the SAMI system.
18–20 February 2026	Circuit managers verify and sign off automated planned enrolment on EduInfoSearch.
PHASE 1 – PARENT/GUARDIAN/CAREGIVER APPLICATION	
10 March 2026	Grades R, 1 and 8 school admissions open (all ordinary public schools).
14 April 2026	Grades R, 1 and 8 school admissions close (all ordinary public schools).
15 April–18 May 2026	Schools process Grades R, 1 and 8 applications.
21 May 2026	Principals finalise and sign off Grades R, 1 and 8 application statuses on the SAMI system.
26 May 2026	Circuit managers sign off all Grades R, 1 and 8 online admission statuses on EduInfoSearch.

28 May 2026	System displays the outcome of Grades R, 1 and 8 applications.
28 May–10 June 2026	Parents/guardians/caregivers are informed of the outcome per email/SMS for Grades R, 1 and 8.
28 May–15 June 2026	Parents/guardians/caregivers confirm acceptance of Grades R, 1 and 8 placements.
PHASE 2 – SCHOOL PLACEMENT	
15 June–31 July 2026	Schools fill available Grades R, 1 and 8 spaces.
15 June, until placement is concluded.	Parents/guardians/caregivers are informed of spaces. They must accept and confirm placement within three days .
PHASE 3 – DISTRICT PLACEMENT	
03 August 2026 – admissions conclusion	WCED resolves and places unplaced learners in consultation with schools.
From 1 st day of school for learners – January 2027	Schools confirm enrolment on CEMIS.

9. Transfer requests: Grades 2–7 and 9–12

- 9.1 A transfer is defined as a request by a parent/guardian/caregiver of a learner already enrolled in a school, seeking placement at another school in Grades 2–7 or Grades 9–12.
- 9.2 Owing to a high demand for spaces, schools can only consider placement where spaces are available. The WCED will prioritise transfer requests of learners in **exit grades** and consider transfer requests in the case of relocation or **serious cases**. (Please refer to 9.3 and 9.4 below for definition.)
- 9.3 **Exit grade** transfers will apply where the learner attends a school that does not have Grade 7 or 12 as the highest grade offered at that particular school (this usually applies to a primary school that has been extended to include Grades 8 and/or 9).
- 9.4 **Serious cases** are cases where the transfer is necessitated by considerations regarding the learner's mental and/or physical wellbeing and/or directed by a court or the Department of Social Development.
- 9.5 Any other transfer request, where the learner is already enrolled at an ordinary public school, will be subject to availability at the requested school(s).
- 9.6 **Procedure for online transfer requests (Grades 2–7 and 9–12)**
- 9.6.1 Please note that parents/guardians/caregivers **must capture an application for a transfer** on the SAMI system.

- 9.6.2 Parents/guardians/caregivers who do not have access to the SAMI system may complete a **hard copy** of the **WCED transfer request form** and submit the completed form, with the supporting documents, to the school of their choice or their nearest district office.
- 9.6.3 Schools and districts will be required to issue parents/guardians/caregivers with a confirmation receipt as proof of having submitted a hard copy application (Annexure E).
- 9.6.4 Schools will only be able to capture requests where a parent/guardian/caregiver wishes the learner to transfer to their school specifically.
- 9.6.5 Districts will be able to capture transfer requests for multiple schools.

9.7 Transfer request time frames (schools and districts ONLY)

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

2026/27 DATES (GRADES 2–7 AND 9–12)	ACTIVITY
PHASE 1 – SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS ONLY	
03 August 2026	System opens for parents/guardians/caregivers, schools and districts to capture Grades 2–7 and 9–12 transfer requests on the SAMI system (all ordinary public schools).
17 August 2026	System closes for parents/guardians/caregivers, schools and districts to capture Grades 2–7 and 9–12 transfer requests on the SAMI system (all ordinary public schools).
18 August 2026 – 04 September 2026	Schools process transfer requests.
07 September 2026	Principals finalise and sign off transfer request statuses on the SAMI system.
10 September 2026	Circuit managers sign off all transfer request statuses on EduInfoSearch.
16 September 2026	System displays the outcome of transfer requests.
16–18 September 2026	Parents/guardians/caregivers are informed of the outcome per email/SMS.
16–30 September 2026	Parents/guardians/caregivers confirm acceptance of transfer placements.
PHASE 2 – SCHOOL PLACEMENT	
30 September 2026 – 13 October 2026	Schools fill available spaces.
13 October 2026 until placement is concluded	Parents/guardians/caregivers are informed of spaces. They must accept and confirm placement within three days .

PHASE 3 – DISTRICT PLACEMENT	
13 October 2026 – admissions conclusion	WCED resolves and places unplaced learners in consultation with schools.
From 1 st day of school for learners – January 2027	Schools confirm enrolment on CEMIS.

9.8 The transfer request process takes place in three phases:

- 9.8.1 In **phase one**, as per the table above, schools or districts will capture the transfer request and schools resolve placement.
- 9.8.2 In **phase two**, schools and district officials resolve placement.
- 9.8.3 In **phase three**, district officials resolve placement.

10. Required documentation

10.1 In the case of Grades R, 1, 8 and transfer requests, certified hard copies of the supporting documents must be submitted to the school or district. The documents must be uploaded by the school or district onto the online system. The parent/guardian/caregiver must only submit hard copies to the school once the learner has been accepted and the parent/guardian/caregiver has confirmed their final choice on a date to be determined by the school.

10.2 List of documents

Grades R, 1, 8 and transfers

- (a) The last official school report card/results of the learner, if the learner attended a school previously.
- (b) Identity document/birth certificate/passport of the learner;
OR
Birth certificate/passport of the learner;
OR
In the case of foreign learners, a copy of parent's/guardian's/caregiver's refugee or asylum seeker permit on which the learner's name should appear;
OR
If the learner was not born in South Africa (SA), a refugee or asylum seeker permit issued in the learner's name;
OR
If the learner of foreign parents/guardians/caregivers was born in SA: a handwritten birth certificate.
- (c) Immunisation card (*Road to Health Chart*) of the learner (applicable to primary schools only)
- (d) Proof of residence (municipal or rates account/lease agreement/affidavit confirming residence)

- 10.3 The principal of the school must advise the parent/guardian/caregiver to furnish the required documents within 30 days. If the parent/guardian/caregiver is unable to furnish the required documents within 30 days, they must inform the principal of the delays or difficulties encountered.
- 10.4 Where the parent/guardian/caregiver does not have the required supporting documents, a signed affidavit from the parent/guardian/caregiver deposited before a commissioner of oaths, such as a police official of the South African Police Services (SAPS), is required. (Refer to Annexure C: Draft template of an affidavit to be completed).
- 10.5 Subject to 10.2 (a)-(d) above, the application is **INCOMPLETE** until ALL the relevant supporting documents required by the WCED have been submitted to the school.
- 10.6 Any learner whose parent/guardian/caregiver has not provided any of the required documents during application for admission, shall nonetheless be allowed to attend school.

11. **Application processing**

- 11.1 As the accountable officer, the **principal** must sign off the status of applications on the SAMI system on **21 May 2026 (Grades R, 1 and 8) and 07 September 2026 (transfers), as the successful status of an application cannot be reversed after the outcome has been published and parents/guardians/caregivers notified.**
- 11.2 **Schools MAY NOT deviate from the time frames given.**
- 11.3 **Schools MAY NOT inform parents/guardians/caregivers of the outcome of their application before it is displayed on the SAMI system.**
- 11.4 Schools may not ask parents/guardians/caregivers to confirm before the due date as they have the right to wait until all schools have notified them of the outcomes of their applications.
- 11.5 If parents/guardians/caregivers 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.
- 11.6 If parents/guardians/caregivers do not confirm acceptance by **15 June 2026 (Grades R, 1 and 8) and 30 September 2026 (transfers)**, schools may offer such spaces to learners on the waiting list or to other learners who still need placement.
- 11.7 The SAMI system generates a list of "placement in progress" (unplaced) learners and indicates which schools have spaces available as applications are processed.

- 11.8 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/guardians/caregivers of the available spaces.
- 11.9 It is the parent's/guardian's/caregiver's responsibility to ensure that they have secured a space for a learner at another school before transferring the learner out of a school.
- 11.10 Schools are requested to make every effort to empower parents/guardians/caregivers to apply on the SAMI system by assisting in the following ways:
- (a) Governing bodies could allow parents/guardians/caregivers 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/guardians/caregivers, educators, administrative staff, interns or computer literate Grades 7–12 learners could volunteer to assist parents/guardians/caregivers with the online application process.
- 11.11 In cases where internet access is unavailable, parents/guardians/caregivers may access the internet at public libraries, hand in hard copy applications directly to schools or request assistance from the district office.
- 11.12 Parents/guardians/caregivers who approach schools directly for assistance with admissions may not be turned away.
- 11.13 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.
- 11.14 Schools must give parents/guardians/caregivers a **WCED learner admissions form** which must be captured on the system on behalf of the parent/guardian/caregiver.
- 11.15 In the case of a transfer request where a parent/guardian/caregiver is unable to access the system, schools/district officials must give them a **WCED transfer request form** which must be captured on the system on behalf of that parent/guardian/caregiver.
- 11.16 Schools and district officials must acknowledge any communication received from parents/guardians/caregivers and must act on any enquiry within 10 school days.
- 11.17 All interactions with parents/guardians/caregivers or their representatives must be captured on the SAMI system.
- 11.18 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers are strongly advised to apply to more than one school. This will ensure that they have another possible option if their school of choice does not have space.

- 11.19 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers 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.
- 11.20 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers 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.
- 11.21 All applications, whether captured by the parent/guardian/caregiver or handed in to the school, MUST be captured and processed on the SAMI system.
- 11.22 Schools must prioritise applications submitted during the official application time frame.
- 11.23 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 admission information database.
- 11.24 Schools are reminded that parents/guardians/caregivers 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.
- 11.25 Schools and districts MUST capture ALL late applications received.

12. **Confirmation of acceptance and submitting supporting documents**

- 12.1 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers must confirm acceptance of their final choice before **00:00 on 15 June 2026 (Grades R, 1 and 8) and 30 September 2026 (transfers)**. If they 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.
- 12.2 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers 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.
- 12.3 The school must upload all confirmation letters/reply slips which were submitted to them on the SAMI system **before 00:00 on 15 June 2026 (Grades R, 1 and 8) and 30 September 2026 (transfers)**.
- 12.4 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers must upload copies of the supporting documents required onto the SAMI system when they apply.

- 12.5 In the case where a parent/guardian/caregiver/learner does not have the required supporting documents, a signed affidavit by the local SAPS is required. This excludes the learner's report card which must be submitted.
- 12.6 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers must be informed that a completed admission 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.
- 12.7 **After 15 June 2026 (Grades R, 1 and 8) and 30 September 2026 (transfers),** parents/guardians/caregivers must hand in certified copies of supporting documents to the school where the learner's confirmation of acceptance was submitted or confirmed for 2027. This must be done within **seven school days** after confirmation of acceptance or on a date to be determined by the school.
- 12.8 Governing bodies have the right to reject applications should parents/guardians/caregivers submit false/untrue information or fraudulent documents.
- 12.9 After confirmation of acceptance by parents/guardians/caregivers, schools may proceed to offer open spaces to learners on the waiting list or other learners who still need placement.
13. **Resolving cases where learners have not secured a space at a school**
- 13.1 Learners who are already in a school and are applying for the following year to a different school are not considered unplaced.
- 13.2 Cases where learners still need a space for the following year are referred to as "**placement in progress**".
- 13.3 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 circuits and districts.
14. **Official procedure for late applications**
- 14.1 The circular must be read in conjunction with the WCED SOP for dealing with LATE applications.
- 14.2 The WCED SOP details the processes and procedures to be followed by a parent/guardian/caregiver of learners, officials of the education department and principals to manage late applications for admission to schools in the Western Cape Province.

- 14.3 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers who are unable to get to the district office, may go to their nearest school for assistance.
- 14.4 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers must be informed that a completed admission form handed in to a school does not automatically guarantee a space at the school.
- 14.5 The WCED cannot assist parents/guardians/caregivers if they have not adhered to the above procedure.
15. **Official procedure for a parent/guardian/caregiver whose applications to schools were all unsuccessful**
- 15.1 **Before 31 July 2026 (Grades R, 1 and 8) and before 13 October 2026 (transfers)**
- (a) The parent/guardian/caregiver must first engage with the school to try to resolve placement.
 - (b) Parents/Guardians/Caregivers are advised to do the following before 31 July 2026 (Grades R, 1 and 8) and before 13 October 2026 (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.**
- 15.2 **After 31 July 2026 (Grades R, 1 and 8) and after 13 October 2026 (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.
16. **Admission appeals to the Provincial Minister of Education**
- 16.1 Late appeals cannot be logged online and must be directed to the Ministry by email via edumin.edumin@westerncape.gov.za, **stating reasons for the late submission.**
- 16.2 Late appeals will only be considered at the Minister's discretion.

17. **Advocacy programme**

- 17.1 The WCED will embark on a full advocacy programme which will include various media formats and platforms to inform the public.
- 17.2 This will include print media, posters, pamphlets, print advertisements as well as radio and applicable social media platforms.
- 17.3 Top-up information and training sessions on the SAMI system will be held for officials and school admissions staff during January to February 2026. Details of these sessions will follow.
18. 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.
19. All queries in respect of admissions can be directed to the Head: Management and Governance or the relevant circuit manager in each district.
20. Kindly bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all concerned.

SIGNED: B WALTERS

HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 2026-01-30