

The 2020/21 school year has been severely disrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This has created a range of challenges for those working in primary and post-primary education. School principals, teaching, learning support staff and Boards of Governors have been working tirelessly to minimize the impact of this sustained interruption to the education of the children in our schools.

In May 2020, some schools announced they would not be using academic selection as part of their admissions criteria for September 2021.

In June 2020, as part of contingency planning, a number of voluntary grammar schools decided to examine other selection options open to the schools should normal assessments be halted due to an extension of the Covid-19 health restrictions. This work continued through the autumn and has included seeking input from primary schools.

Since then, we participated in a range of discussions and engagement with other principals from our Catholic primary and Catholic grammar schools. We have brought to a close that process and thank all those involved.

Our overriding objective is to ensure that any alternative arrangements for dealing with the admissions criteria in these unique and unprecedented conditions should be as fair as possible.

Having extensively explored every potential option and given the disparity in the range of information available from primary schools, and having sought legal advice, the schools involved decided in these circumstances not to use academic selection as part of the school admissions criteria for September 2021.

This has been an extraordinary and abnormal school year and therefore it was decided by the Boards of Governors that such a challenging learning environment would require an exceptional and one-off response reflecting the unique circumstances of this time. However, we firmly believe that the fairest means of selecting children for oversubscribed schools is by way of testing.