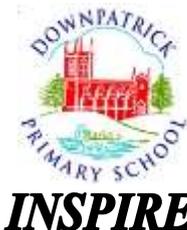


Downpatrick Primary School
10 Mount Crescent
Downpatrick
Co. Down
BT30 6AF



*Improvement, Nurture, Success, Potential
Innovation, Responsibility, Endeavour*

Telephone: 02844 613934
Fax: 02844 617764
info@dps.downpatrick.ni.sch.uk
www.downpatrickps.org
Principal: Mr N Stevenson

Information for Post Primary Application relating to Children who had applied to AQE/GL

Dear P7 Parents

21 January 2021

I know this is a very uncertain time for everyone with AQE and GL scrapped and no confirmation yet of the criteria post primary schools will use. I have received no information regarding any of this yet, but I can assure you of two things:

- We will update you when we receive any information (although you can guarantee Twitter or BBC will have it first).
- We will support you and your child whatever the outcome.

As I understand it there are three possible routes that grammar schools could go down:

1. Non-selective criteria, as Lagan College has announced it will use. These criteria can include – having siblings currently enrolled, attending a prep, child having registered to sit AQE/GL test, eldest child, distance from school, Randomised Initial letter of Surname etc.
2. Academic Criteria - You have every right to this data as a parent. If asked for primary school data, we have PTE, PTM & CAT4 standardised scores which were carried out in October/November 2020 plus standardised scores from P3, P4 and P5 if those are needed. We also have the practice test data from last term. This is going to be a contentious issue for grammar schools in so far as the data needs to be robust enough to stand up in a tribunal. The number of appeals to tribunals this year is likely to be much higher than in the past.
3. There is a possibility that individual schools could set their own entrance exams, but at the minute this would be contrary to public health advice as pupils are not allowed in schools unless in the Care Provision.

I think each grammar school will set their own entrance criteria to suit their needs. When these criteria are published, on **2 February 2021**, it will be vital to read through them very carefully.

Until the criteria are published, we can only speculate as to what will be required. A criterion I advise you to look carefully for is use of first preference. To date historically only Lagan College and Saintfield High School have used this but other schools may very well decide to adopt it this year.

The transfer application process is digital this year for the first time, which will in itself throw up challenges. I am due to receive my training on the process next Thursday. In previous years I offered meetings with each of set of parents individually to help complete the paper form. This year I think I shall do the same thing either via telephone or Zoom prior to you having to complete the form.

The application process runs from 1 – 16 March 2021. Application is most definitely not on a first come first served basis. So don't worry if you can't get log in on the first day. Parental guidance for the application process is also to be published on 2 February 2021.

Please try not to let your P7 child sense your anxiety; it really is our job together to do find the best way through this mess for them. Don't get sucked into all the hype on the social media forums and don't let your child set their heart on one particular school, always discuss various options with them.

I will update you when I have more information regarding the process.

Yours sincerely

Niall W Stevenson, Principal

