



Circular Number 0045/2026

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary,
Community and Comprehensive Schools
and the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards**

DEIS Plus scheme: appeal process

1. Executive Summary

This circular details the process for a school that wishes to appeal the decision of the Department of Education and Youth not to include it in the DEIS Plus scheme. This appeal process applies to DEIS Urban Band 1 primary and DEIS post-primary schools only. As the DEIS Plus scheme is focused on supporting schools with consistently high concentrations of educational disadvantage, only schools in these categories were considered for inclusion. Relevant schools will have the opportunity to appeal this decision on one of two grounds:

- i. If a school has identified that there are errors in the enrolment data that it supplied to the department for the relevant years, the school can update the enrolment data on the primary online database (POD) or post-primary online database (PPOD) and the DEIS Plus identification model will be applied to the updated data. Schools are reminded of their statutory obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, including Sections 20 and 21.
- ii. A school may request, without amending any of its POD or PPOD data, that the department verifies that the DEIS Plus identification model has been correctly applied to the school's enrolment data.

The only data required is that which is provided on POD and PPOD. Schools are not required to submit any additional data.

The appeal process will review the school's application for inclusion in the DEIS Plus scheme only. Data provided under this appeal process will not impact on schools' DEIS status or access to other supports allocated by the department.



The process will be overseen by an independent appeals panel. Schools will be informed in writing of the outcome following the appeal process.

2. General

The DEIS Plus scheme is a targeted initiative of the Department of Education and Youth designed to empower children and young people through improved educational attainment to help break the cycle of disadvantage. The DEIS Plus scheme provides additional support for a small cohort of urban schools serving communities with consistently high concentrations of children and young people at risk of educational disadvantage. The scheme will commence from the start of the 2026/2027 school year.

Schools were identified for inclusion in the DEIS Plus scheme through an objective, data-driven process. The DEIS technical working group, with expertise from across the Department of Education and Youth, the Educational Research Centre and Pobal, developed a DEIS Plus identification model to identify schools with the highest concentrations of children and young people at risk of educational disadvantage. The DEIS Plus identification model is underpinned by a range of administrative data relating to every child and young person enrolled in primary and post-primary schools nationally.

The DEIS Plus identification model includes the addition of a DEIS Plus Index developed by the Statistics unit in the department. The DEIS Plus Index places additional weighting on indicators relating to lone parenthood and unemployment.

Children and young people from 'very disadvantaged' or 'extremely disadvantaged areas' (HP score ≤ -20 under either Pobal HP Deprivation Index or DEIS Plus Index), residing in State-funded emergency accommodation, residing in International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) or Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC) accommodation or identifying as Traveller or Roma are designated priority cohorts within the model. The model was applied using enrolment data from the previous three academic years (2023/2024, 2024/2025 and 2025/2026). The identification process was applied to DEIS Urban Band 1 primary schools and DEIS post-primary schools nationally. No application process was required.

The student information from the POD and PPOD that is used in the DEIS Plus identification model is:

- enrolment numbers
- ethnicity indicator of Traveller or Roma ethnic background
- home address data of all students



The Department of Education and Youth is committed to ensuring that all schools are treated equally and fairly in the identification process for inclusion in the DEIS Plus scheme. The DEIS Plus identification model uses the enrolment data which can be fairly and consistently applied across the entire school system. A rules-based national model must consider all schools on the same basis; it cannot substitute locally held knowledge for data that are not available or comparable nationwide.

Further detail on the identification model is available at: www.gov.ie/DEIS

3. Appeal process and period

A school may appeal the decision not to include it in the DEIS Plus scheme by submitting an application via the online form, available at the following link: <https://dessurveys.education.gov.ie/surveys/DEIS-Plus-Appeals-Application-Form>

Amended or additional information may only be provided through updates to the live school enrolment data on the POD or PPOD in respect of enrolment data for the 2023/2024, 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 school years.

Amendments or additions to POD or PPOD should only be made where a school identifies that the information already provided through POD or PPOD is not accurate. In the case of Traveller or Roma ethnicity, this is based on self-identification and can only be included with the explicit consent of the student's parent/guardian. Where amendments are being made to the data on POD and PPOD, schools are reminded of their legal obligations in regard to school enrolment data.

The completed online application form and, where applicable, the updated information on the POD or PPOD systems must be received by the department by 17.00 hours on 25 May 2026.

Applications received after this deadline cannot be considered.

4. Grounds for appeal

The grounds for appeal are limited to one or other of the following:

a) Errors identified by the school in the enrolment data provided to the department

The DEIS Plus identification model was applied to the enrolment returns provided by schools in the National School Annual Census, which was returned



via the POD and PPOD. An appeal will be facilitated where a school has identified an error in the information it provided for enrolments for the 2023/2024, 2024/2025 or 2025/2026 school year. The definition of error in this instance will relate to:

- students included or students omitted in error (Note: this must only be where a clear error has been identified in the enrolment numbers for the school as published on gov.ie.)
- students who have voluntarily self-identified as Traveller or Roma, but where this was not included in the POD or PPOD returns in error (Note: this field is optional. Explicit written parental or guardian consent is required to use this indicator and to allow the transfer of the information to the department.)
- the address data of students is not sufficiently accurate. Schools are advised to provide an Eircode.

It is important to note that any amendments will relate to the school enrolments as of 30 September 2025 only, as per the annual school enrolment return.

Schools are reminded of their statutory obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, including Sections 20 and 21, to establish and maintain an accurate register of students and records of attendance. Boards of management and principals are also required, in accordance with Department of Education Circular 0028/2013 (Maintenance of School Registers, Roll Books and Attendance Books) and subsequent circulars relating to the operation of the POD and PPOD, to ensure that student enrolment and related data recorded in school systems and submitted to the department are complete, accurate and kept up to date.

b) Verification of the application of the model

A school may request, without amending any of its POD or PPOD data, that the department verifies that the DEIS Plus identification model has been correctly applied to the school's enrolment data.

The appeal process does not allow for the submission of new contextual information. The only data required is that which is provided on POD or PPOD. Schools are not required to submit any additional data.

5. Review process

Each application will be subject to a technical review. Where POD or PPOD enrolment data has been updated, the DEIS Plus identification model will be applied using the revised data. Where no revisions have been made, the DEIS



Plus identification model will be applied to the existing POD or PPOD enrolment data.

The technical review process will be witnessed and verified by a department official who is independent of the original identification process. This official will act as an independent observer and will provide a report on the technical review aspect of the appeal process.

Following completion of the technical review, a report outlining the findings of the appeal will be prepared and submitted to the appeals panel. This report will include the outcome of the technical review and the report of the independent observer. It will include a recommendation to uphold or deny the appeal.

An appeals panel will provide independent assurance in relation to the operation of the appeal process. The panel will consider the outcome of the technical review and determine whether the appeal has been examined in line with the stated grounds and whether the appropriate procedures have been followed.

The panel will comprise of three members with relevant expertise, including:

- an independent chairperson
- a member with expertise in data analysis or statistics and
- a member with expertise in education policy or educational disadvantage

All members of the panel will be independent of the original identification process and will not have been involved in the development of the DEIS Plus identification model.

Following consideration of the report of the appeal process, the panel will reach a final decision to either uphold or deny the appeal. Where the appeal is upheld, the school will be included in the DEIS Plus scheme. Where the appeal is denied, there will be no change to the school's DEIS status.

6. Notification to schools

Schools will be notified of the outcome of the appeal in writing by the Department of Education and Youth. Notifications will be issued promptly following the conclusion of the appeal process.

7. Further information

For further information please contact deisplus@education.gov.ie



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