

17 August 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to you at the request of the Department of Education and Skills who are seeking the following information on the nationality, mother tongue and ethnic/cultural background of students who have been offered and accepted a place in post-primary schools for the coming year.

The Department requires this information for the purposes of statistical analysis and reporting in the areas of social inclusion and integration of students in the education system. The Department has also informed the schools that it has consulted with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner in respect of the data they are now seeking to collect.

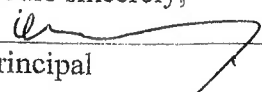
The Department has advised schools that it will only use this information in an aggregate format for the above purposes, i.e. not identifying individual students. Access by Department staff to any of this information is restricted to a small number of Department staff, not exceeding 15, who provide technical support to schools on the collection of this data or who work in the area dealing with statistical analysis. Further information on the purposes for which this data is required by the Department and how it is managed and secured is available in Departmental circular 0023/2016. A FAQ on the use of the data of post-primary students by the Department is also available. Copies of both of these documents may be found on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) or on request from the school.

With the exception of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) the Department has informed schools that it will not share individual data on a student's nationality, mother tongue or ethnic/cultural background with any other body or person outside of the Department. The CSO may obtain the information provided to the Department under the Statistics Acts. The CSO manage the data so provided in a secure manner and to the same standards that operates for the National Census.

Please note that schools are empowered under legislation<sup>2</sup> to receive information on a student's nationality which they may in turn share with the Department. In order to collect details of mother tongue and share it with the Department, the school must obtain the consent of the parent/guardian. In respect of the ethnic/cultural background of the student (because this is deemed sensitive and personal<sup>3</sup> for data protection purposes) the school must first obtain the explicit written consent of the parent/guardian to collect this data and share it with the Department.

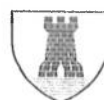
Please complete the attached form and return it to the school, **on Monday 29 August 2016.**

Yours sincerely,

  
Principal

<sup>2</sup> Social Welfare (Consolidation) Act 2005 sections 262-266 and S.I. 317 of 2015 Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment)(No. 4) (Sharing of Information) Regulation 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Section 2 of Data Protection acts, 1988 and 2003



**Circular 0023/2016 - APPENDIX A (2) FORM for the collection and return of student data by the school to the Department of Education and Skills.**

NAME OF SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Academic year which student is in \_\_\_\_\_

**Q1: What is the student's NATIONALITY<sup>4</sup>** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please use BLOCK CAPITALS)

**Q2: Is English or Irish the MOTHER TONGUE<sup>5</sup> of the student?** -----  
(answer YES or NO)

**IN RESPECT OF THE NEXT QUESTION YOU MAY OPT NOT TO PROVIDE AN ANSWER.**

**Q3: To which ethnic or cultural background does the above named student belong?**

*Please circle only one category (these categories used are based on the Census)*

1. White Irish
2. Irish Traveller
3. Roma
4. Any other white background
5. Black or Black Irish – African
6. Black or Black Irish – any other Black background
7. Asian or Asian Irish – Chinese
8. Asian or Asian Irish – Any other Asian background
9. Other including mixed background
10. No consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**Please return completed forms to the student's school**

**This form should be retained by the school for the duration of the student's enrolment and made available for inspection by an officer of the Department or the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, if required.**

<sup>4</sup> NATIONALITY is the preferred nationality which the parent/guardian (or student, where of an age deemed competent to do), so provides. It is chosen regardless of whether the student is adopted or has dual nationality.

<sup>5</sup> MOTHER TONGUE is the language a child speaks as their first language.

**Appendix B – The student data and the purposes for which it is being collected.**

| <b>Data required</b>   | <b>Purpose</b>  | <b>Comment</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| Nationality*   | <p>This is required for statistical and reporting purposes.</p> <p>Nationality is collected for students in the education and training sectors.</p> <p>Data will be used in aggregate format only.</p>  | <p>*It is the preferred nationality which the parent/guardian or student who is deemed competent to do so provides. It is chosen regardless of whether the student is adopted or has a dual nationality.</p>  |
| Is English or Irish the mother tongue* of the student (Yes/No) | <p>To help identify need for language support.</p> <p>To monitor progression and assessment of outcomes.</p> <p>Meet national and EU reporting requirements.</p>  | <p>*Mother tongue is the language a child speaks as their first language.</p>   |
| Ethnicity or cultural background of the student                | <p>To assist outcome focused planning of policy and support for minority groups</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of policy supports</p> <p>Data on students from the Traveller community is required for the allocation of enhanced capitation.</p> <p>Data on Roma is required for reporting to the EU and UN.</p> | <p><b>The identification in relation to ethnic and cultural background is on the basis of voluntary self-identification. It is not compulsory. Parents and students are free to decline to provide this information.</b></p> <p>The question is similar to the question in the national census.</p> |