

Circular 0040/2019

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 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 Commission 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 0040/2019. 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 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 legislation¹ 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 personal² 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.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

¹ 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.

² Section 2 of Data Protection acts, 1988 and 2003

Circular 0040/2019 – APPENDIX 2 – CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for Sensitive Personal Data for the School's October Return to the Department of Education and Skills

Certain sensitive personal data which the Department asks post-primary schools to furnish via the October Returns process requires your written consent for your child's school to record this information and for the school to forward this information to the Department.

Please note that the reference to "you" in this consent form means a parent or a guardian of a student, or a student aged 18 years and over who is attending a recognised post-primary school.

Please enter the following details in BLOCK CAPITALS

Name of School: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Name of Student: _____

Class year of student: _____

1. What is the Ethnicity and Cultural Background of your child?

- White Irish
- Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Any other White Background
- Black or Black Irish – African
- Black or Black Irish – any other Black background
- Asian or Asian Irish – Chinese
- Asian or Asian Irish – any other Asian background
- Other (inc mixed background)
- No Consent

Signed: _____
Parent/Guardian/Student

Date: _____

Please complete this form and return to your post-primary school. This form will be retained by the post-primary school and will be made available for inspection by authorised officers of the Department or from the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.

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The student data and the purposes for which it is being collected.

Data required	Purpose	Comment
Ethnicity or cultural background of the student	To assist outcome focused planning of policy and support for minority groups Monitoring and evaluation of policy supports Data on students from the Traveller community is required for the allocation of enhanced capitation. Data on Roma is required for reporting to the EU and UN.	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. The question is similar to the question in the national census.