

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

**ALTERNATIVE
EDUCATION
ASSESSMENT &
REGISTRATION**

**A Guide to completing an R2 Information
Form for an Independent School/
Programme of Education**

**For children in receipt of an education in a place other than a recognised school
under Section 14 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.**

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Contents

Introduction	3
A. Relevant Legislation	3
B. R2 Information Form – Types of R2 Forms	3
C. Completing an R2 Information Form	4
D. R1 Application Form for parents who wish to educate their child at an Independent School... 4	
E. Parents' R1 applications and the R2 Information Form	5
F. How should I submit the R2 Information Form with associated documents?	5
G. How should I submit any accompanying R1 application forms?	6
1.0 Guide to Completing Section 1 School Information	6
Section 1.1 General Information	6
Section 1.2 School Governance	7
Section 1.3 School Staff.....	7
2.0 Guide to Completing Section 2 Safeguarding and Welfare	7
Section 2.1 Garda Vetting	7
Section 2.2 Child Protection and Welfare	7
Child Safeguarding Statement as required by part (11) Children First Act 2015.....	7
Child safeguarding information and training for staff and volunteers	8
3.0 Guide to Completing Section 3 Premises and Safety	9
4.0 Guide to Completing Section 4 Education Provision	10
Section 4.1 – Time Devoted to Education.....	10
Section 4.2 – Educational Provision/Curriculum	10
5.0 Guide to Completing Section 5 Children Enrolled	11
What Children do I include on the R2 Enrolment List?	11
What information do I need to provide for children on the R2 Enrolment List?	12
Children Enrolled – Tab 1	12
Children Previously Enrolled – Tab 2.....	12
6.0 Guide to Completing Section 6 The Checklist.....	13
7.0 Guide to Completing Section 7 The Principal's Declaration	13

Please read this guidance prior to submitting the R2 Form with associated R2 Enrolment List and associated required documents.

Click on the links in the list of contents above to navigate between sections of this document.

Introduction

A. Relevant Legislation

Under [Section 14 of the Education \(Welfare\) Act, 2000](#) every child being educated in Ireland in a place other than a recognised school¹ (as defined under [Section 10 of the Education Act](#)) i.e., in the home environment or at an independent school / centre of education² must be registered with Tusla - Child and Family Agency.

The process of registration involves assessment of the educational provision. Assessments are carried out by an authorised person from the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service (AEARS) on behalf of Tusla.

The Minister for Education on 21 February 2025 introduced an updated application form (R1) defined in legislation to govern the application process for parents who wish to educate their children outside of a recognised school. A copy of the legislation, Statutory Instrument 758, 2024 can be found [here](#).

B. R2 Information Form – Types of R2 Forms

Under Section 14 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, a parent who chooses to educate their child in a place other than a recognised school (as defined in the Education Act, 1998) must apply to have the child registered by the Child and Family Agency (the Agency). If the child is educated in an independent school, certain information is required from the school. The R2 form is used by independent school/programme of education providers to return information to the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service regarding the provision, the premises, governance, and safeguarding of children enrolled.

The **R2 Initial Form** is submitted prior to the Independent School opening or as soon as is practicable thereafter. On receipt of an R2 Initial Form the Independent School will be subject to a preliminary assessment, in order to make registration decision for children in receipt of an education under the provision. Further information about the assessment process can be found in Section 4.

The **R2 Annual Update Form** is submitted at the beginning of each academic year to return and confirm information provided regarding governance, the premises, the educational provision, children enrolled for the academic year, and arrangements for safeguarding. Updates and any changes made or proposed for the identified academic year should be included under the relevant section on the R2 Annual Update form.

¹ “recognised school” means a school which is recognised by the Minister in accordance with [section 10](#) under the Education Act 1998.

² An Independent School is an education setting which does not fall under the auspices of the [Department of Education](#) in Ireland, and are not required to implement the state education curriculum for children.

The **R2 Supplementary Form** is submitted periodically during the academic year to return updated information for any changes at your school. This includes changes to the building, governance, staff numbers, and updates for children that require section 14 registration (not previously included on an R2 Initial/Annual Update Form) and children that leave your school during an academic year. Where the only updates to the school relate to children enrolled you can complete a shorter version **R2 Supplementary Enrolment Form**.

C. Completing an R2 Information Form

Under [Section 14 of the Education \(Welfare\) Act, 2000](#) a parent who chooses to educate their child at an independent school (in a place other than a 'recognised school'), certain information is required from the school. This information should be returned to the [Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service](#) - Tusla Child and Family Agency on an R2 Information Form.

The principal or nominated person in charge at an Independent School is responsible for the information provided on the form. All parts of the form should be completed. R2 Forms are designed to be completed as a digital version and are submitted by email (see Section E. for further guidance). A checklist is provided to assist you in ensuring that the required documents are included. The relevant R2 form should be completed by or on behalf of the principal/person in charge of an independent school. While the form may be completed on behalf of the principal, the principal (person in charge) must complete and sign the declaration in Section 7.

D. R1 Application Form for parents who wish to educate their child at an Independent School

The R1 Application Form is defined in legislation to govern the application process for parents who wish to educate their children outside of a recognised school. A copy of the legislation can be found [here](#). The R1 Application and Guidance form is available to download on the [Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service website](#).

R1 Applications must be accompanied by a certified copy of the child's birth certificate (or passport where a birth certificate is not available). A certified document is a photocopy of an original document that has been viewed, validated and marked as original sighted by one of the following:

- *A practising Solicitor or Commissioner of Oaths*
- *A member of An Garda Síochána*
- *A Notary Public*
- *Peace Commissioner*

R1 Applications must have the required consent. All legal guardians must sign the R1 application form in order for the application to be processed. The rights of parents in relation to guardianship are set down in the Guardianship of Infants Act 1964. Married parents are

automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this. Where it is not possible to obtain a signature for consent for a parent/legal guardian, a Court Order dispensing with the requirement for their consent for the purposes of an application for Section 14 Registration must be provided.

E. Parents' R1 applications and the R2 Information Form

Independent Schools must inform parents of their obligation to apply for Section 14 Registration and should ensure that parents of children³ attending their school have submitted a valid application to the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service. The R2 Form should be accompanied by **an R1 application in respect of each child for whom a valid application for Section 14 Registration has NOT previously been submitted**. Independent Schools may facilitate parents by submitting an R1 application, completed by parents, **on their behalf**. Alternatively, parents can submit an R1 application directly to the Independent School Section of AEARS by email or by post. Independent Schools should liaise with parents regarding their own process and arrangements to ensure a valid application is submitted prior to or as soon as practicable following the child's³ enrolment. Where parents chose to submit their application directly to the service, they are directed to inform the Independent School when an application has been submitted.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) **must apply** for registration if their child is attending an Independent School and is **over six years old and has not reached the age of 16 years. If a child is aged between 16-18 years and has not yet completed 3 years of post-primary education, an application must be submitted³.**

It is recommended that Independent Schools include information regarding the requirement for parents to submit an R1 application into their admissions policy. It is recommended that the admissions policy includes arrangements for how the application is submitted to the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service i.e., by the school on behalf of the parent or by parents/guardians directly to the AEARS. Independent Schools may decide to gather R1 applications and certified documents for children enrolled under the age of six years, applications should not be submitted to the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service until the child has reached the age of six (or within 3 months of their sixth birthday).

F. How should I submit the R2 Information Form with associated documents?

Once completed the **R2 Information Form** along with a **Full Enrolment List on the Template Provided** (see guidance for Section 5. Children Enrolled) **should be sent by email to**

³ Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 a child is a person resident in the State who **has reached the age of six years** and who—

1. has not reached the age of 16 years, *or*
2. has not completed three years of post-primary education
whichever occurs later but shall not include a person who has reached the age of 18 years.

independent.schools@tusla.ie. All additional relevant documents identified on the **R2 Information Form** and checklist should be scanned and attached to the email. We recommend that documents are submitted in a compressed folder. Please note that the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service - Tusla cannot access any cloud platforms, please do not send a link to an external platform.

We recommend that you password protect the R2 Information Form and/or the accompanying Enrolment List **using the password provided to you** by the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service. If you require assistance with your password or to password protect your documents, please contact a member of the AEARS Independent School team **by email at independent.schools@tusla.ie** or on **the advice line at 01-771 8649**.

G. How should I submit any accompanying R1 application forms?

R1 applications with a certified copy of the birth certificate/passport can be sent by the school on behalf of parents/guardians to independent.schools@tusla.ie. Alternatively, parents/guardians, in consultation with the school, can submit an R1 application directly to the AEARS. We recommend if you are sending a number of applications by email, that applications and associated certified documents are sent in a compressed folder. Please note that the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service Tusla cannot access any cloud platforms, please do not send a link to an external platform.

R1 applications can also be sent by post to

**Independent School Section,
The Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service,
Floor 7, The Brunel Building,
Heuston South Quarter,
Dublin 8,
D08X01F.**

The Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service - Tusla record and log all post as it is received. Where Independent Schools are submitting an application on behalf of parents by post, **a copy of the application should be made** by the school and/or the parent prior to posting.

If you require any assistance to submit R1 application forms on behalf of parents/guardians of children attending your school, please contact a member of the AEARS Independent School team on the **advice line 01-771 8649** or **by email at independent.schools@tusla.ie**

1.0 Guide to Completing Section 1 School Information

Section 1.1 General Information

All parts of School Information should be completed. Please include the name of the nominated contact person for the purpose of communication regarding the information provided on the R2

Form, the enrolment list, and any associated documents. While another person may manage the information provided relating to the R2 Information Form, the principal of the school is responsible for the information submitted. Where the school operates with a management structure that does not include a principal, you should provide details for the person nominated to fulfil this role. The person identified as the principal for this purpose should sign the declaration in Section 7 of the R2 form.

Section 1.2 School Governance

All parts of School Governance must be completed. Where the options available do not relate to or describe the governance of your school, please provide additional information in the section provided.

Section 1.3 School Staff

All parts of School Staff section must be completed. We request that you just provide numbers for staff and volunteers at your school under the relevant section. Independent Schools should keep records as appropriate for all employees and volunteers.

Information relating to Staff and Child Safeguarding is contained in Section 2.0 below.

2.0 Guide to Completing Section 2 Safeguarding and Welfare

Section 2.1 Garda Vetting

The [National Vetting Unit](#) of An Garda Síochána should be contacted in relation to all matters regarding the vetting of staff employed at your school. Statutory obligations for employers in relation to Garda vetting requirements for persons working with children and vulnerable adults are set out in the [National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Acts 2012–2016](#). All staff must be Garda vetted in accordance with [Part 3, Article 12 National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Act 2012](#).

Under these Acts, it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. The Acts create offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with its provisions.

Where applicable overseas police vetting must be sought for persons carrying out relevant work with children. Your school/organisation should ensure that it fully complies with all the requirements of legislation.

Section 2.2 Child Protection and Welfare

Child Safeguarding Statement as required by part (11) Children First Act 2015.

As an Independent School provider, the Children First Act 2015 (No. 36 of 2015) enacted December 2017 requires that all providers have a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) in place.

The CSS should include a nominated “relevant person” to manage the Child Safeguarding Statement and communicate with Tusla in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement. The Tusla Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit (CSSCU) is a department dedicated to managing the Child Safeguarding Statement requirement. Support and guidance documentation is available for providers to meet this requirement on the [Tusla Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit \(CSSCU\)](#) website and if required by contacting a member of the CSSCU Staff team. The unit is also responsible for operating and maintaining the Register of Non-Compliance under section 13 of the Children First Act 2015.

The Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit (CSSCU) published a report in April 2024 to support the Independent School sector in relation to Child Safeguarding Statement compliance, it is available on the Tusla’s website [here](#) and may be of use to your service. A copy of your Child Safeguarding Statement can be submitted to the CSSCU for their review and guidance and support. Further information is available from the [Tusla Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit \(CSSCU\)](#).

Tusla also has published advice and guidance on the [CSSCU](#) and [Children First](#) sections of the Tusla website or through the links below:

1. [What is a Child Safeguarding Statement](#) (video)
2. [Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement](#)
3. [Template to develop a CSS](#)
4. [CSSCU Review Outcome Form](#)
5. [Understanding Risk Assessments in Child Safeguarding Statements](#) (video)
6. [Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#)
7. [Child Safeguarding Resources List](#)

Information regarding obligations under the Children First Act 2015 can be found at <https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/children-first/>

Child safeguarding information and training for staff and volunteers

It is the responsibility of your organisation to identify what training your staff and volunteers need and to ensure that they receive adequate and appropriate child welfare and protection information and training. [Tusla’s Child Safeguarding Training – What you need to know](#) has three sections to help you with this task:

- **My Learning Journey** – provides guidance the different types and levels of child safeguarding training.
- **Child Safeguarding Training Needs Analysis Template** – provides guidance on conducting a training needs analysis.
- **Child Safeguarding Training Strategy Template** – provides guidance on developing a child safeguarding training strategy. This updates and replaces the information in Appendix 9 of Tusla’s [Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice \(2nd Ed.\)](#).

Tusla has developed an e-learning training module, An Introduction to Children First, which covers recognising and reporting child abuse, the role of mandated persons, mandated assisting, the responsibilities of organisations working with children to safeguard children using their services, and the role of designated liaison persons. The e-learning module can be accessed [here](#).

Tusla has also produced guidance to assist organisations developing their own specific Children First training. Tusla's *Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes* can be accessed [here](#).

Tusla employs Children First Information and Advice Officers who are available to liaise with voluntary and community organisations and provide advice and guidance on Children First 2017. They can also help with any queries about child protection and welfare training. Contact details for your local Children First Information and Advice Officer can be found [here](#).

If you have reviewed this section of the R2 Information Form Guidance Document and still require support in the area of child protection and Welfare you can access support from the [Tusla Child Protection and Welfare](#) section.

3.0 Guide to Completing Section 3 Premises and Safety

Please ensure all sections regarding the premises are filled and that information provided correlates to the premises provided in Section 1 - General Information. Any changes that are made or planned for a premises should be notified to the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service on an R2 Annual Update Information Form or an R2 Supplementary Information Form.

Independent Schools have obligations to ensure that all requirements relating to the school premises are in place prior to opening an Independent School/Centre of Education. All queries relating to planning requirements should be directed to your local planning authority. You can find contact details for your local authority/county council on The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) website [here](#).

Independent Schools are obliged to provide a safe environment for staff and pupils/students and members of the extended school community when on the school premises. The Health and Safety Authority provide extensive information on their website - ([HSA](#)) [website](#). Here you will find information about legislation governing Health and Safety, including under the [Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005](#).

Independent Schools are required to carry out a risk assessment onsite and produce a **Health and Safety Statement**. A copy of the current Health and Safety Statement should be submitted with an R2 Initial Information Form and any subsequent R2 Annual Update Information Form. The Health and Safety Authority also provide information, online courses, learning resources and eTools for [managing health and safety in schools](#). This includes a free online safety statement and risk assessment tool for developing a Health and Safety Statement.

Independent School premises are required by building and planning regulations to have a fire safety and compliance certificate which should be submitted with the R2 Information Form. Information on relevant legislation and fire prevention information can be found on the [HSA website](#)

4.0 Guide to Completing Section 4 Education Provision

As part of the registration process, the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service - Tusla Child and Family Agency will arrange for an assessment of the education that is in place or proposed for the children at the school. Independent Schools are subject to an initial assessment (Preliminary Assessment) and are assessed periodically thereafter (Review Assessment). The assessment will be carried out by arrangement by an Authorised Person appointed by the Agency. The assessment will normally involve an interview with the person(s) responsible for the education of the children (usually the principal and/or teacher(s) in the school) but may also include an interview with the parent(s).

Further details are available on the Independent School Section of the [Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service](#) website and in the Department of Education 2003 publication [Guidelines on the Assessment of Education in Places Other Than Recognised Schools](#).

Section 4.1 – Time Devoted to Education

Independent Schools should submit a copy of the **school calendar** for the current or upcoming academic year, where a calendar is not in use or available the school can provide information regarding the number of days that the school is intended to be open for the current upcoming academic year.

Independent Schools should submit a copy of the **academic timetable** for the current or upcoming academic year. Where a timetable is not available or in use, the school can provide information regarding the time spent or proposed to be spent in delivering the education provision. It is important to note that the time spent on the education provision is a specific part of the assessment of the provision to ensure that children are in receipt of [a certain minimum education](#) under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. For further information please refer to the [Guidelines on the Assessment of Education in Places Other Than Recognised Schools](#).

Section 4.2 – Educational Provision/Curriculum

While a provider may choose to do so, Independent Schools do not need to follow the national curriculum, but each child must receive [a certain minimum education](#). The Independent School should provide a suitable approach in consultation with parents/guardians and within their means, based on each child's learning needs, and appropriate to their age, aptitude, and ability.

Please provide information regarding any changes or updates to the provision when submitting an R2 Annual Update Information Form. Please complete all relevant sections for the Education Provision when submitting an R2 Initial Information Form. If using a published curriculum, please tick one or more as appropriate and provide information regarding any additions or amendments made or proposed.

If published curricula are not used in the school, please give a brief account of the educational provision made for the child's learning. Information must include provision for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Some additional points to consider when outlining the provision are:

- The main areas of learning
- The type/model of education being provided
- Any particular principles or philosophies that inform the education
- Any considerations given to how the learning needs of the child will be met over a period of time and whether plans of work are recorded
- The approaches and/or methods used to facilitate learning

5.0 Guide to Completing Section 5 Children Enrolled

The Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service provide an Enrolment List Template to return information required for **all children attending your school for each academic year**. You are also required to provide information for children that were previously enrolled and have left your school. **Children that have turned 16 years old and have completed 3 years post primary education are automatically removed from the register.**

What Children do I include on the R2 Enrolment List?

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 a child is a person resident in the State who **has reached the age of six years** and who—

1. has not reached the age of 16 years, *or*
2. has not completed three years of post-primary education

whichever occurs later but shall not include a person who has reached the age of 18 years.

All children attending an Independent School who are over the age of six years⁴ and have not reached the age of 16 years who are enrolled at your school for the academic year should be included on the R2 Enrolment List using the template provided. If a child is aged between 16-18 years and has not yet completed 3 years of post-primary education, their name should be included on the R2 Form and an R1 application should be submitted.

The Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service cannot process applications for Section 14 Registration for children that do not come under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, nor can we store the data provided on an R2 Information Form.

⁴As there is a lead in time to processing an application and making a registration decision, children attending your school that due to turn 6 years within a 3 month period following the return of the R2 Form may be included in the enrolment list. The accompanying R1 applications can be submitted by the school on the parents behalf or by the parent directly to the service.

- Please do not include the names of children under the age of six years on the R2 Enrolment List Template (unless they are due to reach the age of 6 within 3 months of submitting the R2 Form).
- Please do not include children that have reached the age of 16 years on the R2 Enrolment List (unless they are newly enrolled and have not completed 3 years of post-primary education).

What information do I need to provide for children on the R2 Enrolment List?

You are required to provide the following information for **All Children** enrolled/due to be enrolled at your school for the current/upcoming academic year.

Children Enrolled – Tab 1

- **First Name** – as on birth certificate. Where the child is known by another name, please include in brackets
- **Surname** – this should be the name on the child's birth certificate and R1 application form
- **Date of Birth** – please include the date of birth for each child using the format DAY/MONTH/YEAR
- **Age** - the child's age will be calculated automatically, **you are not required to enter data into this cell**
- **Class This School Year**– Please use the dropdown menu to identify the class group for the current/upcoming academic year. If no class or group names are used, please select N/A.
- **Other Class/Group Name** – if you use an alternative class naming or grouping system please include details in this column.
- **R1 Form Submitted with the R2 Form** – please use the drop-down menu to confirm if the school is submitting an application on behalf of a parent for a child newly enrolled, recently turned/due to turn six, or for a child where an application has NOT previously been submitted.

Children Previously Enrolled – Tab 2

You are required to provide the following information for children that were enrolled at your school in the previous academic year and have not returned/will not be returning for the current/upcoming academic year. *Please insert additional rows onto the spreadsheet if required.*

- **First Name** – where the child is known by another name, please include in brackets
- **Surname** – this should be the name on the child's birth certificate and R1 application form
- **Date of Birth** – please include the date of birth for each child using the format DAY/MONTH/YEAR
- **Age** - the child's age will be calculated automatically, and **you are not required to enter the age**
- **School Cycle Completed** – Please identify if the child is leaving having completed the full cycle of the school provision or prior to completing the school cycle. This does not apply to children over the age of 16 years who were students at your school that have completed 3

years post-primary education, whose names will be automatically removed from the Section 14 Register.

- **Information for Current Provision** – please use the cell dropdown to identify the current provision for children who previously attended your school. You are not required to provide this information for children over the age of 16 years that have completed 3 years post-primary education. Where information is not provided by the parent(s)/guardian(s) please select Unknown from the dropdown menu.
- **Current School Name** - If the child has moved to an independent school, please provide the school name. If the child has moved to a Department of Education School, please provide the name and the address of the school.

6.0 Guide to Completing Section 6 The Checklist

A checklist is provided to ensure that the R2 requirements are in place. The Principal/Person in Charge should complete and/or review the checklist provided prior to signing the declaration.

7.0 Guide to Completing Section 7 The Principal's Declaration

The information in the R2 Form should be completed and/or reviewed and confirmed by the school principal/person in charge. The checklist should be completed and/or reviewed and confirmed by the school principal/person in charge.

The declaration should be **completed and signed by the principal/person in charge**. You should add a copy of your scanned/photographed signature by inserting it as an image. Typed signatures will not be accepted.

Further information about Legislation, Registration, and Assessment can be found on the [Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service](#) website

If you require any assistance to complete an R2 Information Form, please contact a member of the AEARS Independent School Team at independent.schools@tusla.ie or on 01-771 8649

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