

The background features a grayscale image of an open book with its pages fanned out. A vertical teal bar is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the book's pages. The text is overlaid on a dark gray rectangular area on the left side of the page.

LRC

Legal Resources Centre

School Admissions in the Western Cape for Non-Citizens

School Year 2022

What is school admission?

School admission is the process you must undertake to ensure your child has a placement at a public school in the Western Cape. This pamphlet deals specifically with admissions for 2022. Admissions in 2022 could include the following:

- 1 Children starting school (grade R, grade 1 or grade 8) in 2022**
- 2 Children who have arrived in South Africa at any point during their schooling and need to register at a school**
- 3 Children who have started at another school in South Africa but need, or want, to move to another school**

The Right to Education in South Africa

The laws in South Africa protect your child's right to access education. This includes your child's right to be registered at a school and attend that school for education.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

Section 29(1) of the Constitution states that: "Everyone has the right to a basic education".

This means that all children in South Africa (including undocumented children, non-citizens, refugees and asylum seekers) cannot be denied access to a basic education for any reason.

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

The South African Schools Act (SASA) is the main piece of legislation which deals with schools and school admissions. SASA's purpose is to realise the right to education as contained in the Constitution.

Section 5 of the SASA deals with admission to public schools. It says:

1. A public school must admit learners and serve their education requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way;
2. No learner may be refused admission to a school because their parent or guardian:
 - *Is unable to pay or has not paid the school fees.*
 - *Does not subscribe to the mission statement of the school.*
3. If your child is refused admission to a school, the school must inform you in writing of the refusal and the reason for refusal.
4. If your child is refused admission to a school, you may appeal that decision to the Executive Council.

The Admission Policy For Ordinary Public Schools states the following important aspects about school admission:

- Schools are not allowed to discriminate unfairly against an applicant for any reason.
- School admissions are organised by the school and must happen in a timely and efficient manner.
- The age of admission of a child to a public school:
 - Grade R is age four turning five by 30 June in the year of admission
 - Grade 1 is age five turning six by 30 June in the year of admission
- A public school may not use a test to decide who is admitted to the school.
- The principal of the school is responsible for giving any parent or guardian a copy of the school's own admissions policy and explaining it to the parent or guardian if necessary.

The documents required if your child is not a South African citizen are:

- A study permit; or
- A temporary or permanent residence permit from the Department of Home Affairs; or
- Evidence you have applied for permission to stay in South Africa — for example, this could be a visa appointment slip, or an affidavit setting out the circumstances of your application for permission to remain in South Africa.

Did you know?

A 'study permit' is not necessary if your child has a refugee permit or asylum seeker visa.

If at any point you are told that your child cannot be admitted to school without a 'study permit', please contact the Legal Resources Centre (see contact information at the back of this pamphlet).

Important!

Undocumented children cannot be turned away by a public school because they do not have valid documentation to reside in South Africa. Children already enrolled in a school may also not be removed by that school because they are undocumented.

This was confirmed by the High Court in the matter of Centre for Child Law and others v Minister of Basic Education and Others (case no:2840/2017).

Online admissions

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) is using an online system for school admissions. You must log onto an online portal and complete applications on behalf of your child. This means that if your child has a birth certificate, permit or visa, you do not have the option to submit a paper application — it must be done using the online application form.

You will need:

1. Access to the internet
2. An email address
3. A telephone contact number

If you do not have any of the above, please see the frequently asked questions below.

What to do if your child is undocumented?

If your child has no birth certificate, permit, visa or other form of identity, you should apply directly at the school of your choice for admission and not use the online portal.

How to apply

1. Register to apply.

Go to <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za> — the easiest way to do this may be to type 'Western Cape Education Department Website' into a search engine such as Google. Scroll down and click on the blue tile which says 'Learner Enrolment: Online Applications' Once applications have opened, there will be a button which says 'Register to apply' — click on this and follow the onscreen instructions.

2. Complete your applications.

Log onto the portal. The web address is: <https://admissions.westerncape.gov.za/> Type in the details you used to register. Then click 'Parent Login'. Once you are logged in, there will be a form which you need to complete. Follow the onscreen instructions.

The portal opens on the 26th of February 2021 and will close on 26 March 2021. Once the portal is open, we will record and post a video explaining how to apply. It will be posted on our social media: **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/LRCSouthAfrica>
Twitter: https://twitter.com/LRC_SouthAfrica

If you do not have access to social media, you don't understand English, or you would prefer written instructions for any reason, please contact the Legal Resources Centre (see the contact page on the back of this booklet) or the organisation who provided you with this booklet — we have written instructions which we would be happy to provide you with. The written instructions will also be posted on our social media pages.

Online admissions — Frequently Asked Questions

What if I do not have access to the internet?

You could attend an internet cafe, a library, or a family or friend who does have access. Alternatively, you can contact your Education District Office and explain the situation. You can find their contact details at the back of this pamphlet.

What if I do not have an email address?

You will need an email address as this is the primary method of communication for school applications. You can get an email address for free, very easily. Search 'how to make an email address' on www.youtube.com to find video guides in your home language or, if you can speak one of the official languages of South Africa, go to a library and ask a librarian to assist you or go to an internet cafe and ask a member of staff if they might assist.

What if I do not have a telephone?

Many schools in the Western Cape use telephones as the primary method for contacting you. If you are not able to afford a telephone yourself, you can write the telephone number of a trusted friend or family member, of your workplace or of your employer into the form (but remember to get the permission of the person whose number you are using first).

What if I do not have or have access to a copier machine?

You can take photos of the documents using a smart phone, if you have access to one, and email them to yourself for use in the form. You could also go to a library or an internet cafe and ask the staff to help you with copying documents. Be sure to keep the originals of the documents safe, as you will need them later in the process.

What if I cannot read/write in English?

The form is in English. If you are not confident in reading and writing in English, you can contact the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town or a refugee/migrant community support group in your local area. Please see contact details for the Scalabrini Centre on the back of this pamphlet.

What if I do not understand the form or the terms and conditions?

You can contact your Education District Office for further information or explanation. Alternatively, if you do not understand because you do not understand the language of the form, then you may contact the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town.

Online admissions — Frequently Asked Questions Continued

How many schools should I apply to?

You must apply to at least three schools. You will indicate your order of preference when you complete the online application.

What if I do not know which schools to apply to?

If you are unsure where to apply, but you have enough time to investigate further, you should read the schools' admissions policies, which are usually available on their website or by searching the name of the school plus 'admissions policy' in a search engine. Otherwise, it may be necessary to call the school to request the policy — as mentioned above, it is their responsibility to supply you with the policy and explain it to you. You can also check the school's website or contact the school to see if they have any open days or orientation days.

What should I do after I have applied?

You should notify the school that you have applied for placement of your child/children in their school. The school might have additional admission requirements that you need to be aware of.

What is the deadline?

The deadline is 26 March 2021. You must try to make sure you apply before this deadline.

What should I do if I have missed the deadline?

If you did not apply before the deadline, then you need to approach your Education District Office and enquire about which schools in your district have spaces. You must ensure that you follow up as much as possible with the office. There may be delays, and the longer you wait, the less chance there will be of you finding a space at a suitable school.

What should I do if my question has not been answered above?

You should contact the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), your Education District Office (please see the contact page on the back of this booklet) or the school you are hoping to apply to. You will need to decide who to contact based on what your question is, but the first port of call should always be the WCED.

*By Ruby Peacock and Petra Marais of the Legal Resources Centre,
translated by (French version) Susana Ferrín Pérez)*

If you have any questions or difficulties

Western Cape Education Department

Contact the WCED for information about the application process and any technical issues with making your application.

The WCED operates in eight Education Districts with a Head Office in Cape Town. You can find out which education district your address falls within by speaking to the WCED Head Office or the school you are interested in.

Location	Postal Address	Telephone
WCED Head Office	Private Bag 9114, Cape Town, 8000	021 467 2000
Metro Central Education District	Private Bag X4, Athlone, 7760	021 514 6700
Metro East Education District	Private Bag X23, Kuilsriver, 7579	021 900 7000
Metro North Education District	Private Bag X45, Parow, 7500	021 938 3000
Metro South Education District	Private Bag X2, Mitchell's Plain, 7785	021 370 2000
Cape Winelands Education District	Private Bag X3102, Worcester, 6849	023 348 4600
Eden & Central Karoo Education District	Private Bag X6510, George, 6530	044 803 8300
Overberg Education District	PO Box 588, Swellendam, 6740	028 214 7300
West Coast Education District	Private Bag X3026, Paarl, 7620	021 860 1200

WCED Head Office:

Email: WCED.callcentre@westerncape.gov.za

Switchboard: 021 467 2000

Call Centre: 0861 923 322

Web: wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za

Admissions Office:

Mrs Haneline Jafftha: 021 467 2126

Mrs Patricia van Nieker: 021 467 2171

Scalabrini Centre

Contact the Scalabrini Centre if you need any refugee or migrant specific support in making your applications – for example, if you cannot read English.

Address: 47 Commercial Street, Cape Town

Email: info@scalabrini.org.za

Phone: +27 21 465 6433

The Legal Resources Centre

Contact us if, for any reason, the WCED is refusing you access to make your applications or if your applications have been rejected, and you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against. We are able to assist you if you need legal assistance.

Address: Physical: Aintree Office Park, Block D, Ground Floor, Corner Doncaster Road

Email: info@lrc.org.za

Phone: +27 21 879 2398

LRC**Legal Resources Centre**