



## NEWS REPORT

**Date:** 17 January 2011  
**Expert:** Orlagh O'Farrell  
**Title:** Equality Tribunal finds school admission policy discriminates against Travellers

**Country:** Ireland

**Context**  
**Issue at stake:** Traveller children less likely to be able to comply with conditions of admission to a secondary school  
**Ground of discrimination:** race/ ethnic origin  
**Source:** national equality body DEC-S2010-056  
**Field:** Indirect discrimination in access to education  
**Legislative provisions:**

### Content

**Case:** In a case taken by the Irish Traveller Movement Law Centre, the Equality Tribunal has found a school's admission policy indirectly discriminatory against Travellers and has ordered the school to offer a place to the Complainant.

The school prioritized applicants where they: had a brother who had attended the school; were the child of a past pupil; or had close family ties with the school. The Complainant argued that this prioritization disproportionately affected members of the Traveller community and amounted to indirect discrimination. He argued that as a member of the Traveller community, his father was statistically much less likely to have attended second level education.

**Decision of the Court:** The Equality Tribunal reviewed the evidence and noted that Travellers of the Complainant's father's generation were most unlikely to have attended post-primary school. Having weighed up the statistics, they concluded that the policy of giving priority to sons of former pupils put the Complainant at a particular disadvantage. They proceeded to find that this blanket priority was not necessary to pursue the stated aim of



fostering family loyalty to the school and was disproportionate.

The Tribunal ordered that the High School immediately offer a school place to the Complainant and that it review its admission policy.

**Internet link source and additional information:** (no newspaper links)  
[http://www.pila.ie/download/pdf/equality\\_trib\\_judgement\\_mary\\_stokes\\_on\\_behalf\\_of\\_son\\_john.pdf](http://www.pila.ie/download/pdf/equality_trib_judgement_mary_stokes_on_behalf_of_son_john.pdf)