



CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS' MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Board of Management Handbook 2016

Revised 2016

Catholic Primary Schools' Management Association

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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK 2016



Dedication

This handbook is dedicated to Sr. Eileen Randles, IBVM
Former General Secretary of CPSMA

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [Catholic Primary Schools Management Association](#)
- [CPSMA Services to Boards of Management](#)
- [CPSMA Website](#)

Boards of Management are a wonderful example of volunteerism through the commitment of approximately 18,000 members to the management of Catholic primary schools.

The Catholic Primary Schools' Management Association (CPSMA) endeavours to support those volunteers in their work by the provision of advice, training and information over the life time of the Board of Management. Specific queries in regard to the work of the Board of Management can be addressed to the CPSMA office. CPSMA also represents the voice of management at national level with the partners in education.

This Handbook is intended as a guide for Boards of Management to be used in conjunction with:

1. *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 – 2019*, Department of Education & Skills (DES)
2. DES Circular letters
3. Regulations issued by other relevant departments
4. Patron requirements
5. CPSMA guidance

A significant number of pieces of legislation have been passed which impact directly on the Board of Management. The *Education Act 1998* in particular sets out the role and functions of those involved in the management of schools.

The reproduction of circular letters in this handbook has been avoided with a few exceptions i.e. where circulars are less accessible or are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

As Circular letters change or are superseded by more up to date circulars or legislation from time to time, **Boards are advised that they should check for the most recent updates on the website of CPSMA at www.cpsma.ie and/or the website of the Department of Education & Skills at www.education.ie**

The CPSMA website also offers to members a searchable facility by topic or title.

CPSMA hopes that this Handbook coupled with training, advice, newsletter and website support will be of assistance to Boards of Management.

Catholic Primary Schools Management Association

The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) provides advice and support for Chairpersons and Principals of Boards of Management in over 2,800 schools. It collaborates with other management bodies and negotiates on behalf of these schools with the Department of Education and Skills and other education partners. All Boards of Management of Catholic primary schools are eligible to become members of the CPSMA on payment of annual subscription. This levy is determined by the size of the school.

CPSMA is organised on a diocesan basis. There is an elected diocesan council that meets a number of times a year and is expected to organise various meetings for Boards of Management in the Diocese. Your Board should enquire from the Diocesan Secretary for primary education about the local organisation.

Each diocese sends delegates to an annual provincial council meeting and to the annual general meeting (central council) which is held annually. The CPSMA Board of Directors oversee the running of the organisation.

The CPSMA maintains a very detailed website with materials and resources that assist schools with a variety of school management issues.

In addition to the advice service, diocesan network and council, CPSMA maintains a full-time Central Office at New House, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Phone: 01 6292462 or LoCall: 1850 407 200

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Website: www.cpsma.ie



CPSMA Services to Boards of Management

Employment Issues	General Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching staff Secretary Caretaker Special Needs Assistant Bus Escort Cleaner Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment procedures Seniority Panel rights Redundancy Vetting Disciplinary matters Leave Payroll issues Posts of responsibility Appeals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety Child Protection Insurance Enrolment Section 29 Appeals Legislation Discipline Special Educational Needs Buildings DES schemes/grants Supervision Parental Complaints

Committee Representation	Media	Board Of Management Handbook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Council NCCA NCSE School Accommodation Committee TCC Other 	CPSMA deals with media enquiries on a range of current matters to advance the interests of Boards of Management.	The Handbook is available to all members of the Board of Management.

CPSMA Newsletter	Training: DES Modules On Offer	Representation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published regularly Up to date information Circulated as e-version to Chairpersons and Principals Available on website @ www.cpsma.ie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Appointment Procedures The Board as a Corporate Entity Board Finances and the Role of the Treasurer Legal Issues CPSMA also provides training for members Anti-bullying Data Protection 	<p>CPSMA, in representing the Boards of Management of primary schools, is in regular contact, discussion and negotiation with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DES NPC INTO SIPTU IMPACT IPPN TUSLA NCCA NCSE NEPS Allianz Others...

CPSMA Website

www.cpsma.ie

Valuable source of information – updated regularly- easily accessible.

A wide variety of template documents are available e.g. employment contracts, letters of offer, organisational policy prompts, legislation, FAQs, DES and other guidelines as well as current news items.

1 The Origin and Organisation of Primary Schools in Ireland

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [The Origin of the Primary School System](#)
- [The Constitution of Ireland and Primary Education](#)
- [The Rules for National Schools](#)
- [The Education Act 1998](#)

The Origin of the Primary School System

There have been schools of one kind or another in Ireland for many centuries. From the earliest Christian times, the monasteries were centres of learning. The monks provided education for many in this country and also brought their learning to several European countries.

During penal times, when schools for Catholics were forbidden, the Irish love of learning was kept alive by hedge-school masters, wandering poets and the Seanchai Priests who had been trained abroad shared their knowledge with people of the locality, sometimes under the disguise of the Spailpíní (migratory labourers), a term derived from 'spail' meaning 'scythe' and 'peen', a 'penny' – (a worker at a penny a day). The names of many of these teachers are still revered among local communities around the country. Schools that were established during the eighteenth century either by Royal Charter or by various Societies were not generally attended by Catholic children.

Following Relief Acts at the end of the eighteenth century, lay Catholics (among them Edmund Ignatius Rice, Nano Nagle and Catherine McAuley, each of whom subsequently established religious orders) and individual priests, as well as a small number of religious orders, began setting up schools for Catholic children. Since the number of these schools was small, however, acceptable education was not available on a regular or widespread basis to the majority of young people in the country.

Catholic Emancipation was granted in 1829.

Two years later, in 1831, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, E.G. Stanley, wrote to the Duke of Leinster to announce a

decision by parliament to provide funding for a network of primary schools in this country.

It is generally accepted that the structure of the present system of primary schools is based on the provisions of the 'Stanley Letter'.¹ The 'Stanley Letter' outlined a system of 'national schools' with local patronage/management that, it was hoped, would be acceptable to all the Churches in Ireland. Public funding would be available on certain conditions, which included the involvement of the local clergy and religious, in the provision of the schools. These schools would have combined secular and separate religious instruction.

None of the Churches was satisfied with this arrangement. The Reformed Churches wished to maintain the structures of schools already in place. The Catholic Church, emerging from the period of penal laws, was anxious that its newly won emancipation would extend to education for Catholic children.

By degrees, and arising out of negotiations by all the Churches, modifications were introduced which made the system of schooling more acceptable to members of the different Church communities. A network of national schools was established all around the country. These schools became formal centres of learning, maintaining and enriching the great tradition of scholarship that already existed among the Irish people.

In due course, the school that you are now appointed to manage was established. You should find out about the

history of your school. The following paragraph shows the number of primary schools by Patron body (Department of Education and Skills 2015/2016).

There are 3,126 mainstream primary schools in the country. 2,767 are under the patronage/management of the Catholic Bishops. 181 of these operate through the medium of Irish (composed of 102 in Gaeltacht areas and 79 gaelscoileanna outside Gaeltacht areas). 140 schools are called 'special schools', providing services for children who have special educational needs.² Other patrons include: Church of Ireland (170)³, Presbyterian (17), Methodist (1), Jewish (1), Islamic (2), Quaker (1), John Scottus Educational Trust Ltd. (1), Lifeways Ireland Ltd. (3), An Foras Patrúnachta na Scoileanna Lan-Ghaeilge. (63), Educate Together (64), Schools within Educate Together Network with their own Patron body (12), ETBs (11)⁴ and the Minister for Education and Skills (9).

For over 140 years, Catholic primary schools were managed by the local priest and were mostly 'parish schools'. Convent and monastery schools were managed by religious orders. In 1969, following Vatican II, the Catholic Bishops proposed that lay people should become involved in the management of schools.

1. For the full text of the 'Stanley Letter' see *Irish Educational Documents*, Vol. 1. Edited by Hyland and Milne.

2. In the main, special schools are either under the religious patronage of the Catholic church or under the patronage of various organisations such as the HSE, Ability West, CRC, COPE Foundation, Enable Ireland, St. Michael's House, Irish Autism Action and Saplings Schools. A small number of special schools are under the patronage of various other private organisations and individuals.

3. Six Church of Ireland schools have shared patronage arrangements with the Presbyterian Church and three schools have individual patron bodies.

4. Community National Schools are under the interim patronage of the Minister pending their formal transfer to the ETBs.

Since 1975, management is carried out by a Board of Management. A Board of Management of a one teacher school has four members, whereas schools of more than one teacher have an eight member Board. There is also provision for a twelve member Board under the Pilot Shared Governance Arrangements (December 2015 to November 2019).

Catholic primary schools are organised on a diocesan basis. You will get to know the name of the Diocesan Secretary for primary education appointed by your Bishop. The Diocesan Secretary forges links between the schools and the Patron, and is a source of information and advice.

The Constitution of Ireland and Primary Education

The rights and duties of citizens of the state in the matter of education are set out in Articles 42 and 44.2.4 of the Constitution of Ireland as follows:

Article 42

1. *The state acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.*
2. *Parents shall be free to provide this education in their homes or in private schools or in schools recognised or established by the state.*

3. (1) *The state shall not oblige parents in violation of their conscience and lawful preference to send their children to schools established by the state, or to any particular type of school designated by the state.*
 (2) *The state shall, however, as guardian of the common good, require in view of actual conditions that the children receive a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social.*
4. *The state shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation.*
5. *In exceptional cases, where the parents for physical or moral reasons fail in their duty towards their children, the state as guardian of the common good, by appropriate means shall endeavour to supply the place of the parents, but always with due regard for the natural and inalienable rights of the child.*

Article 44

- 2.4 *Legislation providing state aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending Religious Instruction at that school.*

The Rules for National Schools

The Preface to the Rules for National Schools state as follows:

In pursuance of the provisions of these Articles [i.e. 42 and 44.2.4 above] the State provides for free primary education for children in national schools and gives explicit recognition to the denominational character of these schools.

The Education Act 1998

The Education Act of 1998 expresses *inter alia* the key roles and functions of the Patron, the Minister and the Board of Management in the running of schools.



2 The Catholic Church and Primary Education

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [Historical Background](#)
- [The Bishop as Patron](#)
- [National Directory of Catechesis in Ireland](#)
- [Catholic Schools Partnership Resources](#)
- [Religious Education](#)
- [Religious Education and the Rules for National Schools](#)
- [Primary School Curriculum 1999](#)
- [The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland](#)
- [Ethos \('Characteristic Spirit'\) of a Catholic School](#)
- [Deed of Variation for Catholic Primary Schools](#)
- [Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland](#)
- [Religious Qualifications – Guidance Note for Boards](#)

Historical Background

Based on the teaching of Vatican II,⁵ the Catholic Church has the obligation to preach the Gospel and to teach its doctrines and its disciplines to the faithful (cf. canon 747).

One particular means of fulfilling this mission and mandate is through the medium of Catholic schools.⁶ The origins of the Catholic school can be traced to the earliest centuries of the Church's history, usually attached to a church, a cathedral or a monastery of men or women. This practice of operating schools is found throughout the history of the Catholic Church in Eastern and Western Europe and North Africa, in the first millennium, and worldwide in the past five centuries. The history of the Catholic Church in Ireland, from the days of the early Irish monasteries, has been inextricably linked with that of the operation of schools.

Over the centuries, a framework of doctrine and juridical norms has developed in the Catholic Church around the Christian education of children and the operation of Catholic schools, in particular. First and foremost, the parents of children are the primary educators of their children. Canon 793 §1 recognises the duty and the right of Catholic parents "to choose those means and institutes which... can best promote the Catholic education of their children"; Canon 793 §2 acknowledges that these parents have "the right to avail themselves of that assistance from civil society which they need to provide a Catholic education for their children". The Catholic school is understood to

be the "principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education" (canon 796 §1) and this will require the closest cooperation between parents and the teachers to whom the parents entrust the education of their children (canon 796 §2): in carrying out their role, the teachers are required to collaborate closely with the parents and listen carefully to them. Finally, among the fundamental rights and obligations of Catholic parents is the "real freedom in their choice of schools" – this is something that the faithful are asked to work for in conjunction with civil society (cf. canon 797).

The responsibilities incumbent on Bishops and Trustees of Catholic Schools (where applicable), from a canonical point of view, are contained in canons 793-806. They include the following:

- working to assist the parents in the education of their children (cf. canons 793–794; 796; 802);
- to work with Christ's faithful in making sure that civil society acknowledges the freedom of parents to choose Catholic Schools and provides for education in accord with the conscience of the parents (cf. canons 793 §2; 797; 799);
- to make sure that Catholic Schools conform to the fundamental requirements of the Code (canon 803);
- to ensure that in all Catholic Schools religious instruction is taught and the teachers of religion are appointed in accordance with the criteria of the Code (canons 804-805);
- to exercise oversight of all the Catholic Schools in the diocese (canon 806 §1);

- to carry out an inspection of all Catholic Schools in the diocese (canon 806 §1);
- to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic Schools in the diocese (canon 806 §1);
- to work in partnership with those who are in charge of Catholic Schools to make sure that academic standards are as high in their schools as in other schools (canon 806 §2).

Many of the primary schools in Ireland were established by religious institutes to provide an education that was accessible to as many as possible in society. However, the majority of primary schools are vested in diocesan trusts.

The Bishop as Patron

The Bishop is the recognised Patron of the Catholic school in his diocese. In that capacity, the Bishop has certain rights and responsibilities, particularly in relation to ethos, the appointment of the Board of Management, the appointment of Chairpersons, the appointment of staff, enrolment/admission policy, insurance and buildings. Until recently, the following was the procedure for establishing a Catholic school:

- a. A request to set up a school was made to the Department of Education & Skills by or on behalf of the local Bishop.
- b. The parish was required by the State to provide the site for the school, free of charge.
- c. The parish had to provide a portion of the building cost of the school.

5. *Lumen Gentium* nn. 24; 25; *Christus Dominus* nn. 12; 19; *Dei Verbum* nn. 7-10; *Dignitatis Humanae* n. 13; 15; *Gaudium et Spes* nn. 76; 89

6. *Gravissimum educationis* n. 8.



Since January 1999, an alternative arrangement is possible in the case of new (including replacement) schools. The State may provide the site for the school as well as the cost of building the school. The school will be owned by the State and leased to the Patron for a defined period usually twenty five years.

Decisions about the arrangements to be entered into for new schools (including replacement schools) are the prerogative of the Patron of the schools. Boards of Management should refer all such issues to the Patron.

In appointing the Board of Management of the school the Patron delegates to the members certain responsibilities. Such delegation carries a duty of accountability by the Board of Management to the Bishop as Patron and to the Department of Education and Skills. Subject to the approval of the Minister, the Patron may at any time resume direct management of the school, or nominate another manager to manage the school.

As stated in Section 1, Catholic schools are organised on a diocesan basis. You will get to know the name of the Diocesan Secretary for primary education appointed by your Bishop. The Diocesan Secretary forges links between the schools and is a source of information and advice. S/he is also the link between the schools and the Bishop.

National Directory of Catechesis in Ireland

Extracts from *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland*, 'Children's Religious Education in School' (pp. 140-8); 'Faith Development in Catholic Schools' (pp. 204-10), copyright © Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010; published 2010 by Veritas Publications, Dublin.

Children's Religious Education in School

99. Primary schools seek to launch children on their lifelong journey with an education that honours them personally and helps them to develop and use their affective, active and cognitive learning capacities. Heart, hands and head all have a role to play in how we learn and what we learn. Religious education for children necessitates such a synthesis between heart, hands and head. At the same time, it contributes to ensuring that the education children receive is holistic, experiential and life enhancing.

Religious Education takes place in primary schools in Ireland within circumstances supported by Education Acts in both jurisdictions.⁷ A Core Syllabus for Religious Education in Northern Ireland, drawn up by the four major churches – Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist and Roman Catholic – and negotiated with the Department of Education, Northern Ireland, became compulsory in 1996. The Revised Core Syllabus for Religious Education, again prepared by the four main churches, was published by the

Department in June 2007.⁸ This syllabus is continuous from primary through post-primary school education. It sets out Religious Education subject matter for Key Stages 1-4. It provides a common core for the teaching of Religious Education, which schools are free to build on in a way that suits the needs of their pupils and the ethos of the school. The Code of Practice, Northern Ireland (1998), which guides special education, emphasises the value of children's spiritual development, stating that 'every child attending either a mainstream or special school must receive religious education and attend collective worship, unless this would be against the wishes of the parents or the pupil's statement indicates otherwise'.⁹

In the Republic of Ireland, primary school religious education, focused on the formation of children within their faith community is understood as coming within the remit of the various faith communities. These, in turn, provide both syllabuses and programmes for religious education and formation in their schools. The Education Act, 1998 confirms the requirement that schools 'promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students... in consultation with their parents, having regard for the characteristic spirit of the school'.¹⁰ The spiritual and moral aspects of education have been confirmed as fundamental to education and to fostering maturity in all young people. In fact, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment,

7. See Government of Ireland, *Education Act*, 1998 (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1998); for Northern Ireland see the *Education Reform Act*, 1988 and the *Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order*, 1989.

8. *Revised Core Syllabus for Religious Education*. Available from www.deni.gov.uk

9. *Code of Practice, Northern Ireland* (1998), p. 47.

10. Government of Ireland, *Education Act*, 1998, 9 (d); for background see K. Williams, *Faith and the Nation: Religion, Culture and Schooling in Ireland* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2005).

in its general definition of education, calls for education in all schools to 'contribute to the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development'.¹¹

The Introduction to the revised Primary School Curriculum for the Irish Republic acknowledges and values the contribution of religious education as one of the curriculum areas in primary schools: 'In seeking to develop the full potential of the individual, the curriculum takes into account the child's affective, spiritual, moral and religious needs.'¹² Religious education and formation has always been considered in Ireland to be of the utmost importance for this age group. The Irish State continues this tradition by recognising the role of Christian denominations and other faith traditions in designing curricula for religious education in the schools they manage and in supervising its teaching and implementation.¹³ As an outreach of the local parish, Catholic primary schools seek to encourage the young people belonging to the parish, or other local parishes, to grow and develop in their faith.

100. Catholic primary schools in the Republic and in Northern Ireland are required to follow a religious education and formation programme that fosters and deepens children's Catholic faith. Any new syllabus/ curriculum, and programmes arising from it, will continue

to follow this approach. Efforts to involve children in a creative mix of affective, active and cognitive learning, suited to their age and development, as well as to the varying levels of family participation in faith-based activities, are to be welcomed.

Previous models, highlighted in different ways down through the centuries, should be integrated: the doctrinal approach (learning the teaching of the Church); the kerygmatic approach (focused on coming to know and love Jesus Christ); and the anthropological approach (taking into account the circumstances and experience of the learner). The positive effects of a more recent 'pastoral' model are also becoming evident: a deeper awareness of the connections between home, parish and school; a vision of the parish community as a catechetical community; recognition of the on-going need for the spiritual care of all educators, parents/guardians, teachers, parish ministers; and greater sharing of ideas, responsibilities and resources at diocesan and parish levels.

As well as pupil texts, a significant teacher's manual, videos, posters, workbooks and material for use at home and in the parish are all to be considered helpful. The six fundamental tasks of catechesis, identified in the General Directory for Catechesis, and discussed in Section 2 of *Share the Good News*, should be at the centre of the programme: promoting knowledge of the faith; liturgical education; moral formation; teaching to pray; education for community life (including the ecumenical dimension); and missionary initiation (including inter-religious dialogue).¹⁴

In the religious education of children, co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong. There is common agreement that the dominant faith development issues during childhood are belonging and being cherished.¹⁵ 'It is communities which educate... Education enables us to enter into the community's experience and knowledge, its history and culture, its values and faith.'¹⁶ In later childhood, the child 'begins to take on for him – or herself the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolise belonging to his or her community'.¹⁷ All school-based education, and every school whatever its ethos, should respect and support the faith of the children under their care.

101. All primary schools fall under the obligation, identified by the Departments of Education, North and South, to contribute to the moral, spiritual and religious development of the child. The religious education and

to significant interdenominational and cross border discussion, which has provided a new coherence in what is offered in a wide range of Catholic and other schools, based on an underlying affirmation of the value of supporting and nurturing the Christian faith of children. An Irish-language edition, *Beo go Deo*, is available, as is a Scottish edition. The Church of Ireland Education Board, together with the Methodist and Presbyterian Boards of Education, has developed the *Follow Me* series based on *Alive-O*. [CPSMA Note: Following the publication of the new Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum in Ireland a new programme, *Grow in Love*, is being developed and is being implemented in schools on a phase basis from 2015 – 2019]

11. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, *A Programme for Reform: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Towards the New Century*, 1993, p. 26.

12. Ireland, Department of Education and Science, *Primary School Curriculum: Introduction* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1999), p. 58

13. See Ireland, Department of Education and Science, *Primary School Curriculum: Introduction*, p. 58.

14. In recent years the *Children of God* series, and its re-presentation *Alive-O*, has provided schools with such a programme. The *Alive-O* series has, in fact, led

15. See J. W. Berryman, 'Faith Development and the Language of Faith', D. E. Ratcliff (ed.), *Handbook of Children's Religious Education* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1992), p. 41.

16. Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Vision '08*, p. 7.

17. J. W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 149.

formation that takes place in the primary school does so within the particular ethos or defined characteristic spirit of that school. Such ethos is evident in the belief system, values, spirit and attitudes that are encouraged across the whole school. Ethos is not simply an aspiration; it is a reality, whether carefully defined or not, that shapes behaviour, decision-making and style of relationship within the education community and beyond.

Every school belongs within a community. Parents and the community share their traditions and values with their young people through their school. The Catholic primary school is identifiable by its Catholic ethos. It 'models and transmits a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ'.¹⁸ The whole school is rooted in and moved by the Gospel values of respect for life, love, solidarity, truth and justice. The Catholic school promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person, made in God's image and uniquely loved by God. It welcomes, is respectful of, and engages with, people of all beliefs.¹⁹ The Catholic primary school defines itself in relation to the local Christian community, of which it is an essential part. It builds on 'the foundation of love and faith which parents nurture at home'.²⁰ Catholic primary schools in the Irish Republic operate under the Schedule, agreed with the Minister for Education, reproduced below.

Agreed Schedule for a Catholic Primary School in the Republic of Ireland

A Roman Catholic school (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including living relationship with God and other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

Catholic Primary School Managers' Association, 'Deeds of Variation for Catholic Primary Schools', *CPSMA Members' Handbook*. Available from www.cpsma.ie/publications

The contribution of the Board of Management, Principal, teachers and other staff in witnessing to the Catholic ethos of a school cannot be overestimated. The Board of Management ensures a spirit of partnership with the Patron and Trustees, parents and children, school staff and the parish community. Religious education is provided for Catholic pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church, seeking always to confirm and deepen their experience of lived Christian faith.

Prayer is a feature of the school day and celebrations of the sacraments are a regular part of the school community's life. Interaction during the Religion period should be respectful and supportive of students of other religions,

too. The Catholic school promotes tolerance, respect and inclusiveness. Its educational perspective is Catholic and ecumenical by nature and open to inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogues. It promotes 'the formation of young people in the construction of a world based on dialogue and the search for community ... on the mutual acceptance of differences rather than on their opposition'.²¹ All students should be encouraged to have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith and its traditions, and also of other faith communities.

On the other hand, no pupil need receive, or be present at, any religious education of which her or his parents or guardians disapprove. Timetabling should be arranged to allow easy withdrawal.²² In today's world, with so much movement of peoples, Catholic schools should have great clarity about this issue:

Catholic schools must not renounce their own characteristics and Christian-oriented educational programmes when immigrants' children of another religion are accepted. Parents wishing to enrol their children should be clearly informed of this. At the same time no pupil must be compelled to take part in a Catholic liturgy or to perform actions contrary to his or her religious convictions.²³

The Catholic primary school, usually under the patronage of a bishop and attached to a parish, works closely with the local Catholic faith community, and in particular with the priest and the local Faith Development Coordinator,

18. Catholic Primary School Management Association, *Management Board Members' Handbook* (Dublin: Veritas, 2007), p. 7

19. See the Northern Commission for Catholic Education, *Catholic Education: The Vision* (Belfast, 2006), p. 3.

20. Northern Ireland, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, *The Catholic School* (1992).

21. *Educating Together in Catholic Schools* 53.

22. See *Rules for National Schools Under the Department of Education*, Rule 69.

23. *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* 62.

who visit the school regularly in a supportive role. The connection between school and parish is in this way acknowledged and reinforced day by day. A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community, recognising the dignity and value of every human person.²⁴ Where parents/guardians of children, other than Catholic children, attending the school, wish to provide suitable faith education for their children, the school Principal will be happy to encourage them in this regard.²⁵

The Catholic School in Ireland

- Catholic education is inspired by Jesus Christ. It is person-centred, seeking to develop the full potential of each person.
- Catholic education proposes a sacramental view of reality, helping pupils to see God 'in the bits and pieces of everyday life'.
- Catholic education takes place in open, happy, stimulating and mutually respectful communities.
- Catholic education values intellectual and practical reason, promoting dialogue and understanding between faith, tradition, culture and heritage.
- Catholic education values tolerance and inclusiveness. Catholic schools welcome pupils of

other traditions, faiths and none, seeing diversity as offering opportunities for deeper understanding among people holding diverse convictions.

- Catholic education seeks to enable pupils to act with integrity and justice, in pursuit of the common good in an imperfect world, and to act as stewards of creation.

Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Vision '08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland – Executive Summary.

To Do: Catholic School Community Review

Board of Management, Principal, staff and parents engage in regular review of how the school community lives up to its Catholic ethos. Consider:

- Description of ethos
- Mission Statement
- Connection with local parish(es)
- RE Policy
- Pastoral Care
- SPHE and RSE Policy
- Provision for liturgy and reflective space
- In-service in these areas
- Parents' Council

102. As well as contributing to the religious education of children, the Catholic primary school, as an outreach of the local Catholic parish, plays a very significant role in the Christian initiation of Catholic children as they grow into fuller participation in their local Christian community.

The Catholic school, in conjunction with its parish, and other local parishes, helps prepare its Catholic pupils for the reception of the sacraments of initiation. This takes place at the behest of the parents/guardians, with their cooperation and in partnership with their parish community.

In general, teachers in the Catholic primary school sector participate willingly and generously in the faith formation of Catholic pupils.²⁶ Complaints arise from time to time that primary teachers experience themselves as isolated in the sacramental preparation of children, being left to cater for this alone, without the input of parents/guardians, and sometimes with the minimum of interest from the parish too.²⁷ Such misconstruction, or even abandoning, of roles should not be allowed to develop. Where it is observed, it should be corrected.

The school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round.

The diocese, as part of its Faith Development Services, provides support for schools in both the religious education and the preparation for sacramental initiation of Catholic pupils. It does this through its Primary Diocesan Adviser(s) for Religious Education, who visits schools, supporting school principals and providing in-service and resources for teachers and chaplains.

24. See Catholic Primary School Management Association, *Management Board Members' Handbook*, p. 8.

25. See Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future* (Dublin: Veritas, 2007), 4.3.

26. See Irish National Teachers' Organisation, *Teaching Religion in the Primary School*, (Dublin: INTO Publications, 2003) pp. 43-55.

27. See Irish National Teachers' Organisation, *Teaching Religion in the Primary School*, pp. 54-5.

These advisers often make themselves available also to support parish programmes for parents/guardians and their children as they prepare to receive the sacraments. The diocesan Education Office, a further element within the Faith Development Services of the diocese, facilitates the management and smooth running of the Catholic schools, under the patronage of the local bishop.

In Catholic primary schools, it is the role of the school **Principal** on behalf of the Board of Management to facilitate a consistent and coordinated approach to religious education, appropriate to the school's ethos, and to oversee the school's contribution to the Christian initiation of its Catholic pupils. Those training for principalship in a Catholic school today and those already in position need to be offered in-depth and continuing formation on what is meant by Catholic leadership in the complex world in which we live. It is appropriate that a teacher with specific training be given a post of responsibility as **Religious Education Coordinator**. Their role is to coordinate the religious education activities of the other teachers within the school, not to relieve them of their responsibilities, and in particular to support and resource teachers whose pupils are preparing for reception of the sacraments of initiation. The Principal and/or the Religious Education Coordinator should be in on-going communication with the local Faith Development Coordinator and visiting priest, so that parish, home and school preparation is linked and cooperative. Trainee teachers who wish to work in Catholic schools will have participated in modules at College that will help them to become aware of and engage with religious education and formation, Catholic teaching, the Catholic school,

Catholic sacramental initiation, and appropriate means of supporting the faith of Catholic pupils.

As part of their training, student teachers should also be encouraged to participate in faith development initiatives suitable for their own spiritual needs, as suggested in Chapter 4 of *Share the Good News*. School Boards of Management should seek to support and facilitate individuals and groups of teachers in taking initiatives designed to help them to engage with their own on-going faith development.

A practical difficulty arises when the Catholic pupils in a school come from a variety of parishes. The parishes, along with the parents/guardians, should take a leading role in preparing for the celebration of the sacraments, and they should expect the children from the parish to be initiated normally within their own parish community.

Parents and parish personnel should ensure that children already feel they belong to their parish, and know the other children, so that it is natural for them to celebrate their First Communion within their own parish community and in their own parish church.

103. The Catholic Church accepts, given the pluralism of religious belief that exists in Ireland today, that there should be choice and diversity within the national education system: 'In new areas of population it is incumbent upon the State to plan for the provision of school sites and to ensure, in consultation with the various Patron bodies, that there is a plurality of school provision reflecting the wishes of the parents in the area.'²⁸ It may

28. Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for*

also be desirable for the Catholic Church to enter into new patronage arrangements, providing such arrangements uphold the rights of Catholic parents/guardians, in relation to the religious education and formation of their children within the school curriculum.²⁹

Parents/guardians of Catholic children attending schools other than Catholic schools must, as is always the case, take responsibility for the catechetical formation of their children and give particular attention, with the support of their parish, to the preparation of their young people for the sacraments of initiation.³⁰ As well as the catechesis they give at home, they are asked to ensure that they provide for their children's participation in a full sacramental preparation programme, before putting their children forward for sacramental initiation in their parish.

Together with parents/guardians, the local parish will take responsibility for the pastoral care of students in a Catholic special needs school in the parish. Even though students will attend such a school from a wide catchment area, the parish, with the support of parents/guardians and teachers, will seek to include the students whenever possible in parish activities. Preparation for the sacraments by children with special educational needs who do not attend Catholic schools will require particular and individual attention.

Provision into the Future, 5.1.

29. Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future*, 5.2.

30. See *Codex Iuris Canonici* cann. 773, 776, 777, 798, 804.

Faith Development in Catholic Schools

145. An open and respectful approach to religion and its contribution in shaping our daily lives is a necessary component of every school community. Good religious education, strong pastoral care and effective chaplaincy support are essential for the holistic development of the young. The Board of Management of the Catholic school is responsible for the development of the school on behalf of the Patron/Trustees, with the support of management bodies such as the Catholic Primary School Managers Association and the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools. It appoints teachers and principals to the school, sets priorities and ensures the resourcing of its approved projects. School mission statements and policies, approved by the Board of Management, should reflect a transparently open approach to the established ethos of the school, to its young people themselves and to their religious tradition, experience and beliefs. The Principal and Deputy Principal, the Head of the Religious Education Department (Post-Primary), the Coordinator of Religious Education (Primary), and where possible the Coordinator of Chaplaincy Services and the Coordinator of Pastoral Care in a school, as well as others in leadership roles, should be carefully considered positions, supported, as a priority, by ongoing education and training.

Faith Development Objectives in Relation to Schooling

146. Schools Objective 1: The members of the Catholic Church in Ireland will contribute energetically to developing a holistic understanding of education in school.

Some Indicators of Achievement

- Catholic parents/guardians will be encouraged in their role as the first educators of their children in their religious growth and development.
- Parents who choose to send their children to a Catholic primary or post-primary school will be aware of, understand and support the school's Catholic ethos.
- Catholic leadership at all levels, local, diocesan and national, with the support of the faithful, will give high priority to maintaining and developing Catholic schooling, ensuring that the specific responsibilities of the Catholic Church as Patron of schools, in partnership with the State as the main provider of education, are honoured.
- The national Catholic Education Service for the whole of Ireland, instigated by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious in Ireland in 2008, will oversee partnership within the Catholic schools sector.

147. Schools Objective 2: The Catholic school will operate according to a Mission Statement and Ethos Policy that openly reflects its Catholic spirit.

Some indicators of achievement

- The mission and objectives of each Catholic school will be developed, in conformity with its traditions, through partnership between the Patrons/Trustee bodies, Board of Management, Principal, teachers and parents/guardians.
- The mission and objectives of the Catholic school will be based on Gospel values, respect for each individual and for the common good, and a commitment to the search for truth and the development of the whole person.
- There will be an awareness on the part of all involved in a Catholic school that they are contributing to the promotion of a particular educational experience, founded upon a Catholic anthropology of the person, vision of society, understanding of teaching and learning and of knowledge itself.
- The Catholic primary school, as an outreach of the local parish, will seek to nourish the faith of its Catholic students and assist in their Christian initiation. It will respect the religious tradition of other students and facilitate them in every way.
- In a Catholic post-primary school, the educational needs, including religious education needs, of all will be given priority. The faith of Catholic students will be informed and supported.

- School policies will reflect the openly Catholic atmosphere of the school.
- Alternative models for Catholic schools, which seek to meet the needs of a wide diversity of pupils, will be encouraged.
- Where there are special benefits to a local community, an interdenominational school may be sponsored in conjunction with other Christian denominations.

Renewed Vision: Re-Examining the Catholic School

Our Catholic schools have been the result of huge generosity and commitment on the part of thousands of people over generations. Education was provided for millions when the State could not or would not provide it. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to these people – lay, religious and clergy. But we have to re-examine what role our schools can play in an increasingly pluralist society. When we see how much faithbased schools are in demand in most other countries, we must ensure that we are offering a Catholic education to all and not just a good secular education for ethnic Catholics.

And we are committed to resisting the pressures that would seek to replace education of the whole person with little more than job training.³¹

148. Schools Objective 3: The Catholic school, primary or postprimary, will be characterised by respect, generosity, justice, hospitality and critical reflection.

Some indicators of achievement

- Catholic schools will be known to be open to pupils from all cultural and religious backgrounds.
- The Catholic school, utterly respectful of everyone's belief system, will invite all those who participate in its education system (teachers and parents/guardians as well as students) to know, understand and honour the characteristic spirit within which it builds its education community.
- Recognising and responding to the educational needs of all children, the Catholic school will exercise an option for justice, especially for the poor and disadvantaged.
- The Catholic school will contribute to the future of the Church and of society by developing an informed, critically reflective pupil and teacher body.

Pause for Reflection: The Catholic School, Open to All

The Catholic school's public role is very clearly perceived. It has not come into being as a private initiative, but as an expression of the reality of the Church, having by its very nature a public character. It fulfils a public usefulness and, although clearly and decidedly configured in the perspective of the Catholic faith, is not reserved to Catholics only, but is open to all those who appreciate and share its qualified educational project.³²

149. Schools Objective 4: The Board of Management in a Catholic school will take responsibility, on behalf of the Patron/Trustees, for developing the school, overseeing its Catholic ethos, and supporting the Principal in the daily management of the school, according to that ethos.

Some indicators of achievement

- The Board of Management of a Catholic school will take on the role of overseeing the provision of a clearly defined mission statement, codes and policies reflecting the Catholic ethos and characteristic spirit of the school.
- The Principal and staff of the school will be actively supported by the Board of Management in providing an atmosphere in the school commensurate with its open and respectful Catholic ethos.
- Initial training courses for Boards of Management will include a specific section on understanding Catholic ethos and its implications for decision-making.
- Board of Management members will have an opportunity, at least once a year, to review issues related to the Catholic ethos in the school and to report on this to the Patron.

31. Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Building Faith in Young People*, p. 10.

32. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* 16.

150. Schools Objective 5: The Principal will ensure that the decisions of the Board of Management, and particularly the ethos statement set out by the Board, are lived out in the day-to-day running of the school.

Some indicators of achievement

- The Principal of a Catholic school will be employed on the understanding that he or she is delegated by the Board of Management and has responsibility to encourage, develop and promote the ethos associated with that particular Catholic school.
- Arrangements will be made for the provision of courses/modules in the management of Catholic schools. In-career support for those who are already in position will also be provided.
- The school Principal in a Catholic school, at the behest of the Board of Management, will take responsibility for providing suitable occasions for reflection on the spiritual and religious well-being of the school community. Retreat days for students, with appropriately trained retreat teams, will take place at frequent intervals.

151. Schools Objective 6: Staff in a Catholic school will know, understand and sustain the Catholic ethos within which they are employed.

Some indicators of achievement

- The teaching staff of a Catholic School will be actively involved in promoting the Mission Statement and policies approved by the Board of Management.

- Teachers will be employed on the understanding that they will commit themselves actively to supporting the ethos of the school. At the same time, the school will respect the freedom of conscience of teachers in matters of personal religious belief and practice.
- New teachers, as part of their induction to the school, will have an opportunity to focus on the Catholic character of the school.
- School staff will take the opportunity to review some aspects of the Catholic ethos of the school at least once a year.

Focus Group: The Catholic School Principal as Spiritual Leader

The next generation of principals will need to generate new expressions that inspire, teach, captivate and support the faith in schools. This will require new skills at an intellectual and a human level. Principals will need a more explicit understanding of the philosophical, theological and spiritual underpinnings of Catholic education, and also to develop skills that help teachers, parents and students grasp the importance and challenge of the Christian message in a way that is appropriate to their development.³³

33. D. Tuohy, M. Maume and R. Maxwell, *Beyond Nostalgia: Issues In Trusteeship with Regard to The Catholic Ethos of Post-Primary Schools* (Portlaoise: Presentation Ministries Office, 2000), p. 66.

152. Schools Objective 7: Religious education and faith formation will be evident strengths in the schooling provided by a Catholic school.

Some indicators of achievement

- Religious Education will be one of the crucial elements supporting the characteristic spirit of a Catholic school. Trained Diocesan Advisers for Religious Education will support the Principal and those teaching Religious Education, encouraging and resourcing the school in supporting and informing the faith of Catholic students.
- The Catholic school will establish and maintain strong contact with local Catholic parishes. A nominated member of the school staff will coordinate school input into celebrations of sacramental initiation in the local parish.
- The Catholic primary school, as part of the parish community and with that community, will assist parents/guardians in providing sacramental initiation support for children. School and parish programmes will be coordinated, with the help of parents/guardians, in such a way that home, parish and school develop and maintain close co-operation in the preparation of children for sacramental initiation.
- Teachers of Religious Education in post-primary schools will be fully trained specialist teachers. Religious educators working in a Catholic second-level school, as well as having responsibility for the religious education of all students, will be acknowledged as having a faith formation responsibility to their Catholic students.

- The Bishops' Guidelines for Junior Cycle (1999) and Senior Cycle Religious Education (2006) will be adopted, and a Religious Education Policy will be put in place as recommended in the Bishops' document on such policies (2003).
- Religious Education as a subject will be embraced with Catholic students from a Catholic perspective, and discussed with other students from their perspective. An approach that only speaks of the phenomenon of religion, rather than the students' experience of faith, will be considered insufficient in a Catholic school.

Starting Point: Balancing Faith Development Needs in Catholic Schools

The challenge of the future will clearly lie in defining the place of faith development in the schools, balancing the needs of preevangelisation, evangelisation and faith support for the school community, and linking the school with the faith life of the Church.³⁴

For Further Information and to Find Out More about Share The Good News

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Catholic Schools Partnership Resources

The Catholic Schools Partnership has produced a number of very useful resources for Catholic primary schools.

An important new resource for schools concerning good practice in relation to the inclusion of all pupil is: [CSP – Catholic Primary Schools in a Changing Ireland](#)

The CSP has also produced a process resource which facilitates Catholic primary schools in reflecting upon their characteristic spirit, their school's ethos: [CSP – A Process for Catholic Primary Schools](#)

Two further documents available at www.catholicschools.ie include [CSP – 10 Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Primary Schools](#) and the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference document, Vision 08: <http://www.catholicschools.ie/church-documents/>

34. *Beyond Nostalgia*, pp. 64-5.

Religious Education

"In a climate of growing secularism, Catholic schools are distinguished by faith in the transcendent mystery of God as the source of all that exists and as the meaning of human existence. This faith is not simply the subject-matter of particular lessons but forms the foundation of all that we do and the horizon of all that takes place in the school."³⁵

Nurturing the growth of faith in the child is primarily the right and responsibility of the parents: 'Before all others, parents are bound to form their children, by word and example, in faith and Christian living.'³⁶ The Catholic school and the wider parish community will support parents in fulfilling their obligation in this regard.

One of the most important responsibilities of the Board of Management is to ensure that the school continues to provide religious education for the Catholic children attending the school.

"Specifically religious education, designed to confirm and deepen an understanding of the faith, forms an essential part of the curriculum in Catholic schools and functions at its core. This means, for example, that Catholic schools commit resources and time to religious education as a matter of priority."³⁷

Religious education will include instruction in the teaching of the Catholic Church, but is wider than mere knowledge,

including as it does religious formation as well as information.

Following baptism, the child is gradually assimilated into the Church through sharing in the faith-life of the community and through progressive instruction in the doctrine, spirituality, liturgy, culture and tradition of the Church.

It is appropriate that this instruction should be included as part of the total learning process experienced by the child during the period of formal schooling. It is equally important that the child should experience a way of life that is inspired by that instruction and that leads the child to know and love God.

By virtue of his office, the parish priest is to ensure that children are properly prepared for the Sacrament of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation by means of religious instruction and formation over an appropriate period of time.³⁸ This preparation takes place through the collaboration of home, school and parish.

In each diocese, the Bishop appoints an individual or group of people to act as diocesan advisers for religious education. The Board of Management should know the names of the diocesan advisers and should arrange to meet them annually, if possible.

The diocesan advisers provide support for teachers in the area of religious education. The diocesan advisers will visit

the classes in the primary schools in the diocese and offer advice to teachers.

The diocesan advisers are in a position to report to the Bishop, the parish priest and to the Board of Management about their visit to the school.

Religious Education and the Rules for National Schools

In recent times, the Minister for Education has issued a circular, 09/2016, which removes Rule 68 from the Rules for National Schools. Rule 68 dealt with the whole issue of religious instruction and stated that 'religious instruction is, therefore, a fundamental part of the school course and a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole school.' It also governed the time allocated for teaching religious education on the primary curriculum. The teaching of religious education is central to the ethos of a Catholic school. The Education Act grants sole responsibility for a school's ethos to the Patron. There has been no amendment of the Education Act itself. The removal of Rule 68 was deemed necessary to reflect the fact that some schools in Ireland are not under religious patronage.

For Catholic schools, Religious Education is an important manifestation of the schools' Catholic ethos. That ethos is decided and defined by the Patron, whoever the Patron may be. The circular letter points out, and the Education Act stipulates that a school's ethos is the sole preserve of the Patron. For schools under Catholic Patronage, nothing changes with the abolition of Rule 68. The religious education series, *Grow in Love*, or any other religious

35. Irish Bishops' Conference, *Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland*, p3

36. *Code of Canon Law 774#2*

37. Irish Bishops' Conference, *Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland*, p4

38. *Code of Canon Law 777#2*



education series based on the new *Catholic Preschool and Primary School Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (2015) will continue to be taught to the amount of two and a half hours per week.

Rule 69

1. *The religious denomination of each pupil must be entered in the school register and roll book. This information should be ascertained from the parent (the father, if possible) or the guardian of the pupil, where necessary.*
2.
 - a. *No pupil shall receive, or be present at, any Religious Instruction of which his parents or guardians disapprove.*
 - b. *The periods for formal Religious Instruction shall be fixed so as to facilitate the withdrawal of pupils to whom paragraph (a) of this section applies.*
3. *Where such Religious Instruction as their parents or guardians approve is not provided in the school for any section of the pupils, such pupils must, should their parents or guardians so desire, be allowed to absent themselves from school, at reasonable times, for the purpose of receiving that instruction elsewhere.*
4. *Visitors may not be present during formal Religious Instruction unless with the express approval of the manager.*

The timetabling of secular and religious instruction is set out in Rule 54 and at page 70 of the Introduction book to the Primary School Curriculum 1999.

Primary School Curriculum 1999

The curriculum for primary schools acknowledges the importance of the spiritual dimension of the person and the role of religious education, which 'enables the child to develop spiritual and moral values and to come to a knowledge of God'. The following is an extract from the Introduction to the Primary Curriculum:

In seeking to develop the full potential of the individual, the curriculum takes into account the child's affective, aesthetic, spiritual, moral and religious needs. The spiritual dimension is a fundamental aspect of individual experience and its religious and cultural expression is an inextricable part of Irish culture and history. Religious education specifically enables the child to develop spiritual and moral values and to come to a knowledge of God.

Irish society recognises the right of the individual to choose the particular form of religious expression that reflects the spiritual aspirations and experience he or she seeks. It acknowledges, too, the importance of tolerance towards the practice, culture and life-style of a range of religious convictions and expressions, and aspires to develop in children a tolerance and understanding towards the beliefs of others.

Education, generally, seeks to reflect and cater for a variety of religious conviction and acknowledges the right of parents to arrange for their children's education in a school whose religious ethos coincides with their own religious belief. It is the

responsibility of the school to provide a religious education that is consonant with its ethos and at the same time to be flexible in making alternative organisational arrangements for those who do not wish to avail of the particular religious education it offers. It is equally important that the beliefs and sensibilities of every child are respected.

Since the Department of Education and Science, in the context of the Education Act (1998), recognises the rights of the different church authorities to design curricula in religious education at primary level and to supervise their teaching and implementation, a religious education curriculum is not included in the curriculum documents prepared by the NCCA.³⁹

The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland⁴⁰

The new *Catholic Preschool and Primary School Curriculum for Ireland* (2015) will be rolled out in Catholic schools over the next four to five years. While religious education is one of seven areas in the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999), this is the first time that teachers have been offered a structured outline of what religious education as an academic discipline in Catholic schools contributes to the Catholic education and formation of young children at pre-school and primary level. It is envisaged that the *Grow in Love*

39. *Primary School Curriculum*. Introduction, Government Publications 1999 p.58

40. Irish Bishops' Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, Dublin: Veritas, 2015.

programme and other resources based on this outline will be developed to support teachers in their implementation of the curriculum.

The purpose of the new curriculum is to guide and inform the teaching of pre-school and primary religious education by expressing clearly the opportunities for investigation and reflection to be offered to children, the knowledge and understanding which they can acquire, and the ways in which the curriculum aims to foster Christian faith commitment. It is addressed to bishops, Trustees, principals, teachers, programme and resource writers, diocesan advisers, parents/guardians and lecturers in the field of primary religious education. As professionals, teachers are ultimately responsible for implementing the curriculum of religious education in their own particular classes. This work is carried out in partnership with the Board of Management and the Principal of the school. The curriculum empowers teachers in their agency as critical and creative crafters of quality religious education experiences for their students.

Four-Fold Structure

The content of the curriculum is divided into four interrelated strands: Christian Faith, The Word of God, Liturgy/Prayer and Christian Morality. This four-fold structure provides a clear scope and sequence for religious learning, with clear signposts to the knowledge and skills of religious literacy to be learned at each level of the primary school. This curriculum uses *an outcomes approach*, emphasising the educational alignment between religious

education and the other six areas of the NCCA *Primary School Curriculum* (1999).

Fundamental Principle

A fundamental principle of the curriculum is that children's current religious understanding should form the basis for new learning. The curriculum promotes an incremental approach to teaching and learning by increasing the complexity of concepts and skills of religious literacy as the child progresses through the school. The outcomes outlined in each of strands observe a spiral progression from preschool to sixth class.

Facilitating Planning

The curriculum provides a clear outline of the scope and sequence of skills and religious knowledge that are taught at each level of the Catholic primary school. Within this framework, teachers will be afforded flexibility to plan a programme that is appropriate to the individual school's circumstances and to the needs, aptitudes and interests of the children. It is recommended that teachers use the curriculum to draw up long term plans and to facilitate whole-school planning. They can also use the curriculum (in conjunction with the *Grow in Love* programme) when drawing up fortnightly plans, weekly plans and Individual Education Plans (IEPS). Religious Education is taught for two and a half hours per week in Catholic schools.

Ethos ('Characteristic Spirit') of a Catholic School

Introduction – Irish Bishop's Conference

The Patron and Trustees have responsibility for determining the ethos of the school and the Board of Management is responsible to the Patron for upholding it (*Education Act 1998* Section 15). Religious congregations and orders identify the specific charism of their founder. The ethos of the school will best find expression in the day to day life of the school through the interaction and cooperation of the Patron, Trustees, Board of Management Principal teacher, staff, parents and pupils.

In a pastoral letter in 2008,⁴¹ the Bishops of Ireland outlined a vision for Catholic education in which they stated: "While they share many characteristics with other schools in offering a public service, Catholic schools seek to reflect a distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education. This is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel sees the world in which we live as God's creation. As human persons, we are made in God's image and destined for everlasting life with God. Life is a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Jesus, who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14, 6). He came among us so that, in his own words, we might 'have life and have it in all its fullness'" (John 10, 10). Based on this vision, the following characteristics would be sought within the general ethos experienced and promoted by the school community:

- As a formal agent of education within the Catholic community, the school models and transmits a philoso-

41. Irish Bishops' Conference, *Vision 08*, p2

- phy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are inspired by Gospel values;
 - Christ, as the source of those values, is a familiar and attractive reality for the teachers and pupils;
 - Mary, the strong woman of the Gospels, is admired as the exemplar of the values;
 - The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment;
 - Religious education is provided for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church;
 - Prayer is a feature of the school day;
 - The pupils are prepared for the reception of the Sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation in accordance with arrangements in the diocese;
 - The liturgical seasons are part of the rhythm of the school year;
 - The children are given opportunities to participate in liturgical celebrations arranged by the school;
 - The school identifies itself with its parish, working closely with the local priest (or a priest) who visits the school frequently;
 - The pupils are encouraged to participate in parish activities appropriate to their age;
 - The school aims at fostering a sense of community between management, teachers, parents and pupils, and a sense of insertion into the wider community of the parish. Gradually, pupils acquire a sense of the Universal Church whose concern extends to all peoples;
 - The Catholic school '...is open to generous dialogue with Christians of other traditions and those of other faiths and none, while remaining true to its own distinctive ethos';⁴²
 - The Principal and teachers aim at making the school a centre of excellence in which high professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe and happy environment;
 - A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities;
 - The school's code of discipline reflects the Christian values promoted within the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils;
 - The school recognises the dignity and value of each person made in the image and likeness of God. This is reflected in the organisation of the school (including admission policies);
 - Close contact is maintained between the school and the home. Parents and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another as partners in leading the young pupils to the fullness of their potential at the different stages;
 - Teachers are encouraged to develop their personal and professional talents through which they glorify God and serve those young people in whose education they play such a significant role;
 - Ancillary staff members are highly esteemed and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education;
 - A positive ethos, while intangible, is nonetheless recognised and appreciated as supportive and enlivening to those who learn and those who work in the school.

Guidelines for the Formulation of an Ethos Statement in a Catholic Primary School

All Catholic primary schools established before 1997 are subject to a lease signed when the school was set up. This lease included an undertaking that the school would be managed in accordance with the Rules for National Schools. In 1997, the Patrons and the Minister for Education agreed (following discussions with the education 'partners') to vary the terms of the existing lease. The new document (Deed of Variation), which supplements the original lease, provides that the school will be managed in accordance with the rules laid down by the Minister of Education and in accordance with a Roman Catholic Ethos.

42. Irish Bishops' Conference, *Vision 08*, p8



This Deed of Variation for Catholic Primary Schools contains a schedule [Cf. page 27].

All Catholic primary schools have been required, since January 2002, to display the Schedule for a Catholic school in a prominent place in the school. The Schedule is the agreed document between the Bishops, the CPSMA, the INTO, the National Parents' Council and the Department of Education and Skills. This Schedule must be included in all school policies e.g. in the school's admission policy and in the criteria for the appointment of all school staff.

Resulting from the Deed of Variation for Catholic primary schools and from the Schedule to the deed, Catholic primary schools arrive at ethos statements. Catholic primary schools that are run by religious congregations usually consult a charter embodying the charism of the founder/foundress when drawing up their ethos statements. Some parish schools consult the mission statement of the parish pastoral council when composing their statement. These 'ethos statements' are also called vision statements or mission statements.

In drawing up an ethos statement Catholic schools in Ireland should refer to the following important documents:

1. The Schedule for Catholic Primary School
2. Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference (2 October 2007) *Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future*
3. Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference (12 May 2008) *Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland*

4. Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference (5 January 2011) *Share the Good News – National Directory for Catechesis*

Sources

- i. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977) *The Catholic School*
- ii. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982) *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to Faith*
- iii. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1983) *Educational Guidance in Human Love*
- iv. Flannery A. (1988) *Documents of the Second Vatican Council. Gravissimum Educationis: Declaration on Education*
- v. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988) *The Religious dimension of the Education in a Catholic School*
- vi. Congregation for the Clergy (August 11, 1997) *General Directory for Catechesis*
- vii. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (November 20, 2002) *Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools*
- viii. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (September 8, 2007) *Educating Together in Catholic Schools. A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*
- ix. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (May 5, 2009) *Circular letter to the Presidents of Bishops' conferences on religious education.*

The Following Describes Best Practice in Formulating an Ethos Statement for a Catholic Primary School

- a. The Board of Management establishes a sub-committee including the Principal, the Chairperson and one other Board member along with the school chaplain to prepare the elements of an Ethos/Mission Statement. The elements are taken from the Schedule for the Catholic School and other relevant documents (charism of religious congregation, mission statement of parish pastoral council etc.). These elements constitute a 'Formation Document'.
- b. The 'Formation Document' is then presented to the Board of Management. The Board approves or amends this formation document. All the members of staff (teaching staff and ancillary staff) are then invited to discuss the approved/amended document.
- c. The members of staff either approve or further amend the formation document as presented to them by the Board.
- d. Following staff consultation the approved/amended formation document is once more discussed by the Board of Management. The Board approves or amends the document further.
- e. At this stage the amended formation document is forwarded to the school's Parents' Council/Parents' Association for approval, amendment or additions.

- f. Following consultation with the parents, the Board asks the original sub-committee (mentioned at (a) above) to prepare a draft ethos/mission statement.
- g. After approving the draft ethos/mission statement the Board then sends it to the school Patron and to the Trustees (i.e. the religious congregation for approval).
- h. The Board of Management then presents the approved ethos/mission statement to all the school staff and to the parents.
- i. The ethos/mission statement is displayed prominently in each classroom and in the public areas of the school. It should be displayed in the school lobby alongside the Schedule.

The above procedure takes between six and eighteen months. When completed, the resulting ethos/mission statement is not fixed for all time but should be revisited at suitable intervals.

The CPSMA has recently produced a training video for Boards of Management in relation to the ethos of Catholic primary schools and can be viewed at <http://www.icatholic.ie/cpsma-training-ethos/>.

Deed of Variation for Catholic Primary Schools

Note: All Catholic primary schools established before 1997 are subject to a lease signed when the school was set up. This lease included an undertaking that the school would be managed in accordance with the Rules for National Schools.

In 1997, the patrons and the Minister for Education agreed (following discussions with the education partners) to vary the terms of the existing leases. The new document (Deed of Variation), which supplements the original lease, provides that the school will be managed in accordance with the rules laid down by the Minister for Education and in accordance with a Roman Catholic Ethos.

The new agreement will also be used in the case of all Catholic primary schools established in the future. Members of Boards of Management should make themselves familiar with the terms of the Deed of Variation. In particular, paragraphs A and B and the Schedule to the Deed of Variation should be noted.

WHEREAS:

1. By the Lease, the Lessors, in order to promote the establishment of a National School at _____, which National School is known as _____ (hereinafter called "the School"), demised the plot of ground upon which the School is now erected (hereinafter called "the Demised Premises") to the Trustees for the term of years from the ____ day of _____ 19 __, upon the trusts therein and subject to the yearly rent thereby reserved.
2. The Minister, in order to promote the establishment of the School, approved the payment of certain monies by

the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland out of funds provided by the Oireachtas for the erection of National Schools in Ireland toward the erection of the School.

3. The School is managed in accordance with the Rules for National Schools under the Department of Education and Science published from time to time by that Department, and the Patron of the School whose rights and obligations are as defined in the said Rules is the Archbishop of _____ and his successor as such Archbishop (hereinafter called "the Patron").
4. The Lease was made by the Lessors to the Trustees, as the Present Trustees hereby acknowledge, to erect and maintain not merely a National School in connection with the Minister on the plot of ground thereby demised, but a National School in connection with the Minister adopting and reflecting in its management and in the education, whether moral, intellectual or social, offered and given by it in the School to the children attending thereat, a Roman Catholic ethos.
5. The Minister is desirous that every National School in the State should be placed under the management of a Board of Management and it is proposed that a minority only of such Board of Management should be nominated by the Patron.
6. The Present Trustees, with the approbation of the Minister as testified by his being a party hereto and with the consent in writing of the Land Owners as testified by their being a party hereto and executing these presents, are desirous of revoking the trust in the Lease to the effect that a National School in connection with

the Minister shall at all times during the term thereby demised, be maintained upon the Demised Premises and in lieu thereof, declaring a new Trust that a National School in connection with the Minister adopting and reflecting in its management and in the education, whether moral, intellectual or social, offered and given by it in the School to the children attending thereat, a Roman Catholic ethos shall, during the term of the Lease and any renewal thereof, be maintained upon the Demised Premises and otherwise on the like Trusts as are declared in the Lease.

NOW THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that in pursuance of the said desire

A. The Present Trustees, with the approbation of the Minister as testified by his being a party hereto and with the Consent of the Land Owners as testified by their being a party hereto and executing these presents, **HEREBY REVOKE** that part of the Trusts declared by the Lease to the effect that "a National School in connection with the Minister shall at all times, during the term demised by the Lease, be maintained upon the Demised Premises".

a. The Minister **HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGES** that the Lessors are office holders and dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of _____, and as such are, inter alia, responsible for the management of the affairs of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese, and for the administration and control of religious and education institutions of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese, whether directly or through a Board of Guardians or Trustees, and for promoting and protecting the

religious ethos of the Roman Catholic faith in the School.

b. The Minister Recognises and Acknowledges that the religious ethos of the school is that of the Roman Catholic Faith and covenants with the Lessors not to interfere with or seek to interfere with the Lessors or the Present Trustees in preserving the religious ethos of the School and not to change such religious ethos.

c. In further pursuance of the said desire the Present Trustees, with the consent of the Land Owners as testified by their being a party hereto, **HEREBY DECLARE** that the Demised Premises and the School are now and shall henceforth during the term demised by the Lease and any Renewal thereof which may be made, be Held Upon Trust that a National School in connection with the Minister adopting and reflecting in its management and in the education, whether moral, intellectual, or social offered and given by it in the School to the children attending thereat, with a Roman Catholic ethos (i.e. an ethos in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church) shall at all times during the term aforesaid, and any Renewal thereof, be maintained upon the said premises and school and otherwise on the like Trusts as are declared by the Lease.

B. 1. The Present Trustees, for themselves, their successors and assigns, hereby **COVENANT** with the Land Owners, their successors and assigns, that they, the Present Trustees, their Successors and Assigns, shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that any Board

of Management which may, from time to time, be appointed in accordance with the Instrument of Management to manage the School (hereinafter called "the Board of Management" and references herein to a Board of Management shall be construed accordingly) shall, firstly, manage the School in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Faith insofar as the same relates to education and schools and, thirdly, shall manage and cause the School to be managed in a manner which will uphold and foster such ethos and, fourthly, shall not do anything or permit anything to be done in relation to the School, or the management thereof, which would have or would be likely to have a detrimental effect on the Roman Catholic Ethos of the School.

2. For the guidance only of the Present Trustees and the Board of Management, and Without Prejudice to the right of the Land Owners from time to time to state what they consider to be the essential requirements then prevailing for a National School purporting to have a Roman Catholic ethos or reflecting a Roman Catholic ethos, a synopsis or guideline of what are the fundamental elements of such an ethos is stated in the Schedule hereto.

3. In the event of the Board of Management adopting and maintaining a decision or strategy which is, in the opinion of the Land Owners, contrary to or in breach of the Trusts hereinbefore and in the Lease declared or prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School, they, the Land Owners, shall notify

the Present Trustees in writing of what decision or strategy they consider to be contrary to or in breach of the said Trusts or prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School and require the Present Trustees to take all reasonable steps to procure the alteration by the Board of Management, within the period of six weeks from the date thereof, of their decision or strategy and the substitution in lieu thereof of a decision or strategy which reflects and is in accordance with the said Trusts and the Roman Catholic ethos of the School.

4. In the event of the Board of Management, within the period of two weeks after receipt by them of notification from the Present Trustees that the Land Owners consider a particular decision or strategy to be contrary or in breach of the trusts hereinbefore and in the Lease declared or prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School, contending that the decision or strategy, as the case may be, which has been or may have been adopted by them, is not contrary to or in breach of the said trusts or not prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School, the Present Trustees shall request the Board of Management to communicate their arguments forthwith, in writing, to the Present Trustees as to why and how they contend that their decision or strategy is not contrary to or in breach of the said Trusts or not prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School and the Present Trustees shall forthwith transmit such writing to the Land Owners, who shall consider such arguments within the period of three weeks from the date of receipt thereof by

them. In the event of the Land Owners upholding the decision or strategy of the Board of Management, they shall notify the Present Trustees accordingly and the Present Trustees shall, in turn, notify the Board of Management of the Land Owners' decision. In the event of the Land Owners rejecting the arguments of the Board of Management, they shall notify the Present Trustees accordingly and the Present Trustees shall request the Board of Management to alter their original decision or strategy so as to reflect and be in accordance with the decision expressed by the Land Owners within the period of four weeks or receipt by them, the Board of Management, of the said Decision of the Land Owners.

- C. In the event of the Board of Management being requested to alter any of their decisions or strategies in accordance with the provisions hereinbefore contained and their refusing or failing to do so within the time hereinbefore specified, the Present Trustees, for themselves, their Successors and Assigns, hereby Agree and Undertake with the Land Owners that they shall, in such event and for the reasons so stated and with the Approval of the Minister, request the Patron to dissolve the Board of Management and to appoint a new Board of Management for the School.
- D. It is hereby Agreed and Declared that these Presents and the Lease shall be read and construed together.

IN WITNESS whereof the parties of the First and Second Parts have hereunto have set their hands and affixed their seals and the Seal of the Minister has been affixed hereto the day and year first hereinbefore **WRITTEN**.

SCHEDULE

A Roman Catholic School (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The School models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic School provides Religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED by the **LAND OWNERS** in the presence of:

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED by the **PRESENT TRUSTEES** in the presence of:

PRESENT when the Seal of the **MINISTER** was affixed hereto:

Dated this day of 20

..... First Part

..... Second Part

And

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

..... Third Part



Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland

[As advised by the Irish Episcopal Conference]

Introduction

The Certificate programmes in Catholic Religious Education and Religious Studies provided by a number of Centres in Ireland (North and South) and recognised by the Episcopal Conference (Section C), offer pre-service and qualified teachers foundational knowledge and skills for communicating the Catholic faith to children in Primary schools. These programmes enable schools and their teachers to address the many spiritual and religious opportunities and challenges facing pupils in contemporary Ireland.

The programme presents a summary of the Catholic faith which enables teachers to teach it in a child-centred, developmentally appropriate manner while simultaneously exploring issues surrounding Catholic identity, interculturalism, religious diversity and the importance of promoting respect for all pupils.

In outlining its Specific Aims, the 1999 Curriculum states that one of its purposes is to “enable children to develop spiritual, moral and religious values” (p.34). The Curriculum also emphasizes that among its general objectives it intends to develop a knowledge and understanding of the pupil’s “own religious traditions and beliefs, with respect for the religious traditions and beliefs of others” (p. 36). Religious Education makes a significant contribution to the holistic development of the primary school child and enables the child to develop ethically, spiritually and religiously. The 1999 Curriculum

also states: “In seeking to develop the full potential of the individual, the curriculum takes into account the child’s affective, aesthetic, spiritual, moral and religious needs... Religious education specifically enables the child to develop spiritual and moral values and to come to a knowledge of God” (p. 58).

Reflecting the provisions of the Irish Constitution, especially articles 42 and 44, as well as the 1998 Education Act, the Religious Education Programme will be taught in accordance with the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school. Catholic Religious Education nurtures the faith of children and is grounded in the person of Jesus Christ, in scripture and in the teaching of the Catholic Church (CCC5). It aims to initiate children into the fullness of Christian life and to enable them to flourish as human beings. Catholic Religious Education explicitly supports and supplements other programmes in the school curriculum such as SPHE, RSE and Intercultural Guidelines (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Irish National Teachers’ Organisation, Department of Education and Skills). The Religious Education Programme is taught in a manner that complements other curricular areas such as SESE (History, Geography, Science), Visual Arts, Music, Drama, Literature and SPHE. It also seeks to acquaint students with the inclusive, ecumenical and interreligious perspectives of the Second Vatican Council.

In this way the Religious Education programme in Catholic schools plays a pivotal role in the integration of all subjects in the primary school curriculum by promoting the holistic development of pupils: physical; ethical; spiritual; religious. This is done in a manner that mirrors the provisions of the

Irish Constitution, the Rules for National Schools, the 1998 Education Act, and the CPSMA Handbook.

The word Catholic comes from the Greek adverbial phrase *kath’holou*, and means ‘according to the whole’, with connotations of inclusivity, universality and completeness. Accordingly Catholic education seeks to promote knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith tradition while it simultaneously acknowledges, welcomes and accommodates pupils of other faiths and other traditions. The Catholic school is committed to the promotion of equality, respect and inclusivity as well as serving the needs of those on the margins of society. It also recognizes that faith is always a free act and cannot be imposed. In addition it respects the right of every child to religious freedom and choice which has its foundation in the dignity of the human person (*Dignitatis Humanae* Par 2). The Catholic school particularly acknowledges that parents are the primary educators and therefore seeks to respect their wishes.

In Catholic schools Religious Education integrates the many branches of learning within the 1999 Curriculum into a multi-coloured mosaic; it embraces diversity as a Christian and educational value; it fosters respect for differences in culture and religion on the basis of the dignity of every human being, and it explicitly promotes a spirit of fairness, a concern for all who are in need, and the value of forgiveness in relationships.

General Principles

Religious Education is a curriculum area in the Primary School Curriculum, both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland.



Religious Education and ethical formation contributes to the integrated learning that is encouraged across the curriculum for Primary school children.

In both jurisdictions the content of the curriculum for Religious Education remains the responsibility of the different Church authorities/Patron bodies.

The academic freedom of the various Universities and Colleges of Education providing teacher education programmes is an important value, allowing Colleges to determine how they respond to the requirement to address Religious Education as part of their B.Ed. (or equivalent qualification) and whatever Certificate (or equivalent qualification) they make available in Theological or Religious Studies.

The study themes below, required to teach Religious Education in a Catholic School, are to be considered interactive and complementary rather than isolated and should be studied in a manner that encourages integration.

The requirements set out below are effective from September 2011 forward, without prejudice to those who qualified as primary teachers prior to this date in any of the approved centres listed in Section C of this document.

A/ Undergraduate

For a teacher with an initial teacher education degree to be recognised to teach in a Catholic school they should have 120 contact hours⁴³ in the area of Religious Education, to

include an exploration of Catechesis and Catholic Religious Education, (hours of Religious or Theological subjects, in the B.Ed. or other degree), and of Religious or Theological Studies (taken in an additional Certificate). The prescribed areas for study include:

Religious Education

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and appreciation in a manner that indicates a professional approach to:

- The rationale and aims of Religious Education in Catholic Primary schools in Ireland, including an understanding of the development of the child's linguistic, psychological, spiritual, ethical and moral readiness to engage progressively with their religious tradition.
- The Religious Education and ethical formation of Catholic pupils as set out in the National Directory for Catechesis and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- The current syllabus/curriculum in Religious Education designated by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.
- The programme(s) and/or materials approved for use in Catholic Schools.
- The vision of the person, community and civil society embraced by the Catholic Church including the distinctive features of Catholic Education.
- Short and long term planning for the teaching of Religious Education in Catholic Primary schools in the Island of Ireland.

Theology

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and appreciation in the following fields of study:

- God; Faith, Creed and Trinity
- Jesus Christ and discipleship
- Scripture
- Prayer, Sacraments and Liturgy
- Ethics, Social Justice and Spirituality and Human Rights
- Church and Mission, Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue

These themes allow for inclusion of many current issues, such as social justice, peace and reconciliation, gender, ethics, ecology, equality, disability, sexuality, racial, cultural and religious diversity, citizenship.

B/ Postgraduate

For postgraduate students to be recognised to teach in a Catholic school in Ireland they should have 50 contact hours at postgraduate level in the area of Religious Education, to include exploration of Catechesis and Catholic Religious Education and Religious or Theological Studies (hours of Religious or Theological subjects, in the Graduate Diploma or other degree). Areas to be studied should include:

Religious Education

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and appreciation in a manner that indicates a professional approach to:

43. The hours enumerated in this document are the number of hours recognised by the Catechetics Council. However some centres of provision offer more than the stipulated hours and this is to be encouraged.

- The rationale, aims, and short and long term planning involved in Religious Education in Catholic Primary schools in Ireland.
- The National Directory for Catechesis, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the syllabus/curriculum in Religious Education designated by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and the programme(s) and/or materials approved for use in Catholic Schools.
- The vision of the person, community and civil society embraced by the Catholic Church including the distinctive features of Catholic Education.

Theology

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and appreciation in the following fields of study:

- God; Faith, Creed and Trinity
- Jesus Christ and Scripture
- A minimum of one of following four modules (depending on the Provider and its resources):
 - Prayer, Sacraments and Liturgy
 - Spirituality and Morality
 - Church and Mission and Ecumenism
 - World Religions.

C/ Qualifications

The Council currently recognises the following providers of this programme Catechetics in Religious Education, or its equivalent, as outlined above:

- Froebel Certificate in Religious Education

- Colaiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education Certificate in Religious Education
- Saint Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Certificate in Religious Studies
- Mary Immaculate College, Certificate in Religious Education
- St. Mary's University College, Belfast, Certificate in Religious Education
- University of Coleraine, Certificate in Religious Education
- St. Angela's College, Sligo, Certificate in Religious Education
- Hibernia College, Dublin, Post-Graduate Masters in Education (Religious Education and Theology)

Institutions wishing to apply for recognition of their programmes must send details of their programmes (course outlines, learning outcomes, contact hours, and bibliographies) to the Council for Catechetics of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

For further information please contact: Ms Kate Liffey
Executive Secretary,
Council for Catechetics of the Irish Episcopal Conference,
Columba Centre,
Maynooth,
Co Kildare.

Tel: +353 (0)1 50531

Fax: +353 (0)1 6016401

Email: kate.liffey@iecon.ie

Website: www.catechetics.ie

Religious Qualifications – Guidance Note for Boards

At the September 2011 General Meeting of the Irish Episcopal Conference the document *Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland* was approved.

A Certificate in Religious Education, or its equivalent, is a condition for employment as a teacher in a Catholic Primary School.

The Council for Catechetics of the Irish Episcopal Conference has established a sub-committee with the responsibility to decide in particular situations what would be considered an equivalent to the Certificate in Religious Education.

With regard to the implementation of the document, Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland a twelve month phasing-in period is to be observed.

In certain cases teachers will be allowed time to obtain the Certificate or its equivalent following their appointment.

The document, *Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools* in the Island of Ireland, should not be used to disadvantage teachers appointed prior to its approval and adoption as a standard for all Dioceses.

Boards of Management are required to seek prior approval for all appointments from their Patron's office. Any issues pertaining to 'Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland' should be addressed at this stage.



3 Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 – 2019

[http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Boards-of-Management/
Governance-Manual-for-Primary-Schools-2015-2019.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Boards-of-Management/Governance-Manual-for-Primary-Schools-2015-2019.pdf)

4 The Board of Management in action

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [The Functions of a School as set out in the Education Act 1998 S. 9 and S.15](#)
- [The Procedures for the Establishment and Membership of Board of Management are set out in the Education Act 1998 Section 14](#)
- [Board of Management Meetings](#)
- [First Meeting](#)
- [Emergency Meetings](#)
- [Responsibilities of the Board to the Patron, the Trustees and the Department](#)
- [Disclosure of Interest/Integrity of Board Proceedings](#)
- [Sample Agenda for Board of Management Meeting](#)
- [Cohesion of the Board of Management](#)
- [Boards of Management – A Framework for Good Practice](#)
- [A Framework of Roles within an Effective and Efficient Board of Management](#)
- [School Self Evaluation – a Collaborative Process](#)
- [Board of Management Annual Report](#)
- [Dissolution of a Board](#)
- [Commissioning a Report into the Operation of a Board of Management](#)
- [Obligation to inform Parents concerning the Operation and Performance of the School](#)

The Functions of a School as set out in the Education Act 1998 S. 9 and S.15

Section 9

A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall use its available resources to:

- a. *ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with a disability or other special educational needs, are identified and provided for,*
- b. *ensure that the education provided by it meets the requirements of education policy as determined from time to time by the Minister including requirements as to the provision of a curriculum as prescribed by the Minister in accordance with section 30,*
- c. *ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices,*
- d. *promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school,*
- e. *promote equality of opportunity for both male and female students and staff of the school,*
- f. *promote the development of the Irish language and traditions, Irish literature, the arts and other cultural matters,*
- g. *(ensure that parents of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of eighteen years, the*

student, have access in the prescribed manner to records kept by that school relating to the progress of that student in his or her education,

- h. *in the case of schools located in a Gaeltacht area, contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language,*
- i. *conduct its activities in compliance with any regulations made from time to time by the Minister under section 33,*
- j. *ensure that the needs of personnel involved in management functions and staff development needs generally in the school are identified and provided for,*
- k. *establish and maintain systems whereby the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations can be assessed, including the quality and effectiveness of teaching in the school and the attainment levels and academic standards of students,*
- l. *establish or maintain contacts with other schools and at other appropriate levels throughout the community served by the school, and*
- m. *subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school.*

Section 15 – Functions of a Board of Management

1. *It shall be the duty of a board to manage the school on behalf of the Patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.*

2. *A board shall perform the functions conferred on it and on a school by this Act and in carrying out its functions the board shall:*

- a. *do so in accordance with the policies determined by the Minister from time to time,*
- b. *uphold, and be accountable to the Patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school, and at all times act in accordance with any Act of the Oireachtas or instrument made thereunder, deed, charter, articles management or other such instrument relating to the establishment or operation of the school,*
- c. *consult with and keep the Patron informed of decisions and proposals of the board,*
- d. *publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the Patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitu-*

tional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with,

- e. have regard to the principles and requirements of a democratic society and have respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society,
 - f. have regard to the efficient use of resources (and, in particular, the efficient use of grants provided under section 12), the public interest in the affairs of the school and accountability to students, their parents, the Patron, staff and the community served by the school, and
 - g. use the resources provided to the school from monies provided by the Oireachtas to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with a disability or other special educational needs, including, where necessary, alteration of buildings and provision of appropriate equipment.
3. For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in the Act shall confer or be deemed to confer on the board any right over or interest in the land and buildings of the school for which the board is responsible.

The Procedures for the Establishment and Membership of Board of Management are set out in the *Education Act 1998* Section 14

Section 14

1. It shall be the duty of a Patron, for the purposes of ensuring that a recognised school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint where practicable a Board of Management the composition of which is agreed between patrons of schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers and the Minister.
2. A board established in accordance with subsection (1) shall fulfil in respect of the school the functions assigned to that school by this Act, and, except in the case of a school established or maintained by a vocational education committee, each board shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and power to sue and may be sued in its corporate name.
3. Pending the establishment of a board as provided for by subsection (1) the persons who have responsibilities under the structures and systems in place in a school for the management of that school at the commencement of this Part, including boards of governors, shall, as appropriate, discharge the functions of a board under this Act.
4. The members of a board shall, except where articles of management otherwise provide, be appointed by the Patron of the school.

5. When making appointments to a board established in accordance with subsection (1) the Patron shall comply with directions given by the Minister in respect of an appropriate gender balance and the Minister, before giving any such directions, shall consult with patrons, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers.
6. The Minister, with the agreement of the Patron, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, shall prescribe matters relating to the appointment of a board.
7. Except as provided by this Act, no action shall lie against a member of a board in respect of anything done by that member in good faith and in pursuance of this Act or any regulations made by the Minister under this Act.
8. Where a Patron determines that the appointment of a board in accordance with subsection (1) is not practicable, the Patron shall inform the parents of students, the teachers and other staff of the school and the Minister of that fact and the reasons therefor at the time of such determination and, thereafter, if a board is not so appointed, the Patron shall, from time to time or as requested by the Minister, inform the parents, teachers and other staff and the Minister of the reasons therefor.

Board of Management Meetings

Frequency of meetings

The *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019* require a minimum of one meeting per school term and not less than five meetings in a school year. However, as a general rule, CPSMA recommends that boards meet once a month during the school year.

Length of Meetings

Board meetings should generally last from an hour to an hour and a half. If there is an item of particular concern that may necessitate a longer meeting, it is advisable to determine at the beginning of the meeting the time at which the meeting will end.

It is generally recommended to adjourn a meeting and reconvene some days later rather than to rush to a decision when board members may be tired and anxious to finish.

First Meeting

1. Every member of the Board shall, at or before the first meeting of the said Board, sign a declaration of acceptance of membership of the Board and an undertaking that he/she will adhere to the rules pertaining to his/her duties as per the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 – 2019* (GMPS 2015 – 2019) and all other relevant rules, regulations, legislation and Departmental circulars relating to the membership and operation of Boards and, until such declaration is completed he/she shall not be entitled to act

as a member of the Board. A template of this declaration is provided in the *GMPS 2015 – 2019* Appendix G.

2. In circumstances where the Principal teacher does not opt to take up the allowance payable for acting as Secretary to a Board of Management, the Board shall elect a Recording Secretary from amongst its members in accordance with the *GMPS 2015 – 2019* S.11. The Board shall also elect a Treasurer from amongst its members in accordance with *GMPS 2015 – 2019* S.12 (a).

Ordinary Meetings

1. The Chairperson may call a meeting of the Board at any time.
2. Notification of the time and place of the intended meeting, together with an agenda for the meeting, shall be sent to every member of the Board at least seven clear days before each ordinary meeting. Every member of the Board shall be notified of all meetings – including meetings where issues may concern an individual member directly and he/she may be required to subsequently withdraw or decide not to attend if the meeting is solely for that purpose.
3. Where exceptional circumstances warrant it, a meeting of the Board may be convened at less than seven days' notice and this fact should be recorded in the minutes.
4. The quorum of the Board shall be three members in the case of one teacher schools and five members in the case of all other schools. In schools with a Shared Governance Board the quorum will be seven members.

The meeting shall be quorate throughout the entire course of the meeting.

5. Subject to (4) above, a Board may act notwithstanding one or more than one vacancy among its members.
6. The proceedings of the Board shall not be invalidated by reason of any defect in the appointment or qualifications of any member thereof.
7. All decisions of the Board shall be taken at a properly convened meeting. It is recognised that, in some limited circumstances, the use of a conference call may be required to facilitate a Board meeting. In such circumstances, this fact must be recorded in the minutes and the Board must be fully satisfied that the confidentiality of the meeting's proceedings will be maintained at all times. In accordance with (4) above, the meeting shall remain quorate throughout the entire course of the meeting.
8. Where a matter is put to a vote, it shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present and voting therein and, where there is an equal division of votes, the Chairperson of the meeting may exercise a second and casting vote. The numbers of those voting for and against a motion shall be recorded.
9. Minutes of the proceedings of the Board shall be recorded in an appropriate form and shall be signed by the Chairperson of the meeting of which they are a record, or by the Chairperson of the next meeting. Minutes are the property of the Board and shall be available on request to the Patron, the Trustees and the Department.



10. The provisions of (4) to (9) inclusive above apply to all Board meetings.

Requested Meetings

1. On receipt of a requisition signed by not less than one quarter of the members of the Board plus one, or on the requisition of the Patron, such requisition stating the business to be transacted, the Chairperson shall convene a special meeting of the Board within seven days and no business other than that specified in the notice shall be dealt with at such a special meeting.
2. In the event where a Chairperson fails to convene a meeting within seven days, either the Patron or one of the members requesting the meeting shall call such a meeting.

Emergency Meetings

1. The Principal with the approval of the Chairperson shall have power to convene an emergency special meeting of the Board of Management should the need arise. This meeting shall be held as soon as possible after notification of such meeting has been conveyed to all available members and the usual quorum shall be required.

Responsibilities of the Board to the Patron, the Trustees and the Department

The Board shall make available to the Patron, the Trustees and when requested, the Department such reports and

returns and give to them such information as they may require.

Disclosure of Interest/Integrity of Board Proceedings

1. A member of the Board who stands in a relationship to a person who is a candidate for appointment by the Board as teacher or other member of staff of the school, including the Principal, shall immediately disclose to the Board the fact of the relationship and the nature thereof and shall take no part in any deliberation or decision of the Board concerning the appointment and the disclosure and the decision shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board. In this context Board members are required to make a disclosure not only in the case of a family relationship but in respect of any relationship which could be regarded as prejudicial to ensuring absolute impartiality in the selection process. A professional relationship in itself does not necessarily mean there is a conflict of interest. *GMPS 2015 – 2019 S.15 (a).*
2. Where any member of the Board is related to any person or is connected to any company/business that may be the subject of or have a direct involvement in a matter which is before the Board for consideration (including matters relating to procurement of goods or services), that Board member shall immediately disclose to the Board the fact of that relationship and the nature thereof. Unless the Board is fully satisfied that the relationship concerned is not prejudicial to the preservation of the principles of natural justice and/or public procurement requirements and specifically that the

legal requirement that Board proceedings should not be open to the charge of bias, then that member shall take no part in the Board's deliberations on the matter and the disclosure and absence of the member shall be recorded in the minutes. In this context Board members are required to make a disclosure not only in the case of a family relationship but in respect of any relationship which could be regarded as prejudicial to ensuring absolute impartiality in the deliberations of the Board. *GMPS 2015 – 2019 S.15 (B).*

3. Where any member of the Board is personally the subject of a matter which is before the Board for consideration, that Board member shall withdraw from the Board's deliberations on the matter unless the Board is fully satisfied that the presence of the member during any such deliberations is not prejudicial to the preservation of the principles of natural justice and, specifically, the legal requirement that Board proceedings should not be open to the charge of bias. The absence of the member from the deliberations shall be recorded in the minutes. The provisions set out in the *GMPS 2015 – 2019 S.13 (c) (ii)* concerning notification to individuals of Board meetings should be followed in this instance.
4. Where the Patron is satisfied, after due investigation and following receipt of a recommendation from the Board, that any member of the Board failed, at a material time, to disclose a relationship, he/she shall remove that person from membership of the Board in accordance with Section 16 of the Education Act, 1998, and shall not subsequently appoint that person as a member of any Board of Management.



5. In the event of a member of the Board refusing to withdraw from a meeting, as provided for in this Section, the Chairperson shall adjourn the meeting and, in the event of such member again refusing to withdraw at the re-convened meeting, the Chairperson shall report the matter in writing to the Patron, who shall remove that person from membership of the Board in accordance with Section 16 of the Education Act, 1998 and shall not subsequently appoint that person as a member of any Board of Management.
6. If a serving Board member (or his/her business or company) wishes to engage in a commercial agreement/business contract with the school the Board member concerned must immediately declare that interest/intention to the Board and preclude him/herself from any involvement whatsoever in any discussion, deliberation or decision in the matter. Where a board member (or his/her company/business) enters into a commercial agreement/contract with the school that member ceases to become a member of the Board. *GMPS 2015 – 2019 S.7 (b) (v).*

Sample Agenda for Board of Management Meeting

(this can be downloaded from www.cpsma.ie)

St. National School Board of Management Meeting

DD/MM/YEAR

1. Opening Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Minutes – Previous Meeting
4. Matters Arising
5. Correspondence
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Principal Teacher's Report
 - OLCS
 - Attendance of Pupils (TUSLA)
 - Child Protection (See DES [Circular 0065/2011](#) & Child Protection Procedures 2011)*
 - Literacy & Numeracy (See DES [Circular 0056/2011](#)*)
 - Report on Anti Bullying Procedures (See [Circular 0045/2013](#)) *
 - Policies for Ratification/School Self Evaluation
8. Reports from Board of Management Officers (Safety/Maintenance) and or Sub Committees (Finance/Building)
9. A.O.B.
10. Agreed Report
11. Date of Next Meeting

*Required as per Circular Letters listed.

1. Opening prayer

- The members of the Board ask the blessing of God on their work for the children of the school for which they have responsibility.

- Any bereavements or special intentions are noted at this point.
- A member of the Board could be invited to lead the group in a short prayer at each meeting.

2. Apologies

- The attendance/non attendance of members at the meeting should be noted in the minutes. Apologies should also be recorded in the minutes.
[Note *GMPS 2015 – 2019 S.7 (d) (i)*, states that if a member is absent from three consecutive ordinary Board meetings, unless such absence was approved by the Board of Management, that member's office shall become vacant and shall be filled, as soon as may be after the vacancy occurring, by a new member appointed in the same manner as that in which the vacating member was appointed.]

3. Minutes of previous meeting

- The minutes are drawn up by the secretary/recording secretary.
- It is essential to record decisions arrived at by the Board and any votes taken. It is generally not necessary to record details of the discussion of the Board.
- The Board will decide how to convey the minutes to the members bearing in mind the implications of Data Protection legislation, but in general the minutes are read aloud at the beginning of a meeting.



- The minutes of the meetings of the Board of Management are confidential to those entitled to be present at Board meetings or at a particular Board meeting. See *GMPS 2015 – 2019* S.8, S. 9, S.15 (b) & (c). S.17 & S.18.
- When Board members agree that the minutes are an accurate and complete record of the business of the previous meeting, the Chairperson signs the official copy, which is retained in a safe place and must be made available on request to representatives of the Patron, the Trustees and/or the DES. All other copies [if any exist] should be collected by the Chairperson and shredded.

4. Matters arising

- The Chairperson and/or Board members check to ensure that any decisions made at the previous meeting have been implemented.
- If any matter arising from the minutes requires a long discussion, it may be dealt with more appropriately under another heading of the agenda.

5. Correspondence

- If there is a considerable amount of correspondence, it can be helpful to have a list prepared for each Board member. This would merely state the origin and the subject matter of each item of correspondence.
- The Board should be made aware of all correspondence addressed to the Chairperson. Any letters of complaints

must be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures.

- The Principal teacher may properly deal with correspondence if addressed to him/her, or she/he may decide to bring the matter to the attention of the Board for their information or to seek the advice of members of the Board.
- Much of the correspondence needs simply to be noted by the Board of Management. This can be indicated on the list of correspondence. Other items may need some discussion and decision by the Board
- If a letter from a solicitor is received, it is advisable to seek legal advice. The Insurance Company must be informed and authorisation for legal advice should be sought before responding to the letter.

6. Finance — Treasurer's report

- The Treasurer's Report should be presented at every Board meeting. Refer to Chapter 8 for advices.

7. Principal's report

- This is where the principal reports on the day to day life and functioning of the school. The Principal's report relates to the life and function of the school and may deal with issues of concern or issues likely to be of a concern (as per training manual). It also enables the Principal Teacher to avail of the collective wisdom and advice of the Board members. The Principal Teacher and members of the Board should be familiar with the terms of [Circular 16/73](#) with regard to the role of the Principal Teacher. The

Principal Teacher reports to the Board on a wide range of issues that may vary according to the time of the year.

- In accordance with DES [Circular 0065/2011](#), the Principal's Report must include a report in regard to Child Protection as follows:
 - The Principal Teacher's report shall state the number of reports made to TUSLA by the DLP since the last Board meeting. The Principal's report shall state only the number and not include any other details.
 - The Principal's report shall also state the number of cases, since the last Board meeting, where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made. The Principal's report shall state only the number and not include any other details.
 - Where there were no such cases referred at the report will state this fact
 - The minutes of the Board meeting shall record the above
- Other matters which may be included are;
 - a. **Literacy and numeracy report:** Aggregated assessment data from standardised tests in accordance with DES [Circular 0056/2011](#).
 - b. **Bullying:** The number of bullying cases that remain unresolved after 20 days reported to the Principal/ Deputy Principal since the previous report. In accordance with DES [Circular 0045/2013](#) such cases of reported bullying must be made to the Board at least once a term.



- c. **Pupil Activities and School Events:** Choir, Sport, Drama, Excursions, School Calendar, Retreats, lectures for pupils, etc.
- d. **Enrolment:**
 - Intake of new pupils – numbers etc.
 - Enrolment procedures.
 - Projection of enrolments for the following year(s) with any implications for accommodation, staffing etc.
 - Allocation of pupils to classes and where relevant the retention of a pupil in any class (DES [Primary Circular 32/2003](#)).
 - Pupils with SEN in the school.
- e. **Attendance:** Schools are obliged by law under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 to submit reports on school attendance to TUSLA (formerly NEWB).
- f. **Education Passport:** Confirming when relevant the transfer of pupil information at the end of 6th class to post-primary schools in accordance with DES [Primary Circular 0027/2015](#)
- g. **Staffing:**
 - New teacher(s)/SNA staff.
 - Posts of Responsibility.
 - Substitutes/temporary teachers/SNA's appointed with the approval of the Chairperson since the last meeting of the Board.
- OLCS report – e.g. absences etc [*GMPS 2015 – 2019 S.25*].
- Deployment of teachers to classes.
- Arrangements for substitution for absent teachers [See *GMS 2015-2019 Appendix D S.3*].
- h. **Haddington Road Agreement (HRA) Hours:** An outline of the in-service or additional work undertaken by teaching and SNA staff with respect to their obligations under the HRA and subsequent national agreements.
- i. **Buildings, resources and health & safety:**
 - Supervision of pupils.
 - Condition of the school premises and grounds. School safety concerns.
 - Any incident of behaviour, vandalism, any accident etc. that is of concern to the staff of the school.
 - Provision of class requisites.
 - Fire drill.
 - School library – access to county library, mobile library etc.
- j. **Parents:** Parents Association, Parent-Teacher Meetings,
- k. **Policy review and school planning:**
 - Curricular and procedural policies. It is advisable that draft policies/procedures/plans are made available to and discussed by the Board of Management for consideration and ratification at a subsequent meeting.
- The process of school planning, incorporating staff, parents and Board of Management members.
- School Self Evaluation. [Circular 39/2012](#).
- Curricular innovations, proposals etc.
- l. **Review of school transport**
- m. Any other item of information about which the Principal Teacher is concerned or that she/he judges is useful/necessary/interesting to communicate to the members of the Board

8. Any other business

- The item Any Other Business is intended to allow brief discussion or announcement about items not otherwise discussed at the meeting. It is not advisable to allow substantive issues to be brought up under Any Other Business. If any member of the Board introduces any such issue, it is preferable to defer discussion until the next meeting when the issue can be noted as an item on the agenda.

9. Agreed report

- Under the terms of the Rule for Confidentiality (see *GMPS 2015 – 2019 S. 8 & S.9*) the Board should decide at the end of each meeting what information may be disclosed, to whom and how. In some instances, it is appropriate for the Principal Teacher to convey infor-

mation to teachers and parents. At other times, the Chairperson may need to make an announcement. Usually, however, most of the information may be conveyed informally to teachers and to the Parents' Association.

- It is essential that all Board members respect the confidentiality of matters discussed at meetings unless otherwise agreed by the Board.

10. Date of next meeting

- It is advisable to agree the dates of all Board meetings for the year when the Board holds the first meeting of the academic year. If the schedule of meetings for the year has been agreed, the Chairperson reminds Board members of the date and checks that the date arranged is still suitable for the members. Dates should not be changed unless there is very good reason for doing so, and then with the maximum advance notice possible.
- If the schedule of meetings for the year has not been agreed, then, at the end of each meeting the Board members will decide the date and time of the next meeting. It is advisable that the duration of a Board meeting is agreed and should not be exceeded without agreement at the start of a meeting or during a meeting, where it is anticipated that longer time than usual will be necessary.

Cohesion of the Board of Management

An effective Board of Management is one that has a shared sense of purpose and of commitment to the school for which it has collective responsibility.

Board members should consider together what their particular role is at the beginning of their term of office. Board members might discuss objectives for their term of office that would include the development of the school and of the Board of Management itself. A sense of purpose can engender enthusiasm in the Board members.

At least once a year the Board members should review the parameters of their respective roles and the contribution of the Board to the school at least once a year.

The particular functions that are carried out by the Board of Management in fulfillment of their role are outlined in the other sections of this book. General discussion among the Board members can act as a conduit to arriving at a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The Chairperson should encourage full participation by Board members in discussions. It is important not to allow educational jargon to exclude any member. The talents of each member of the Board should be recognised and affirmed. Tasks/responsibilities may be delegated to members of the Board according to their interests and available time. The contribution that she/he has to make to the functioning of the Board should be valued and encouraged.

The Chairperson should endeavour to generate good communication between members of the Board so as to unite them as a group. She/he should draw on

members' experience and knowledge, and encourage the development of ideas rather than the mere articulation of a point that is either accepted or rejected.

Board members must be assisted in realising and accepting that they carry the collective responsibility for the management of the school, subject to their accountability to the Patron and to the regulations of the Department of Education and Skills.

Boards of Management – A Framework for Good Practice

Bearing in mind the challenges involved in the election and appointment of new members to the Board, it is timely to draw attention to a framework of good practice for Boards of Management. The CPSMA and IPPN suggest the following:

1. Define the functions and responsibilities of a Board of Management, and ensure that each member of the Board has an active part in the management of the school.
2. Board members must be familiar with the school and should study the schedule for the school as outlined in the Deed of Variation
3. Board members must uphold and support the ethos, culture and traditions of the school;
4. The workload should be shared fairly between all Board members and new Board members should be invited to participate in all discussions and work.

5. The agenda for each Board meeting shall be centred on the issues affecting the school.
6. The decisions reached at each Board meeting should be recorded in the Minutes;
7. At the end of each meeting the Board of Management should issue an agreed report to the parents, teachers and the school community;
8. The Chairperson's role is one of facilitating the Board of Management through an agenda of business with a view to achieving responsible collective decisions which, once agreed on, are upheld by all Board members as part of collective responsibility. These decisions are recorded in the Board of Management minute book/file;
9. Decision making is achieved by consensus — voting is used as a last resort. In the event of an equal division of votes, the Chairperson has a casting vote;
10. Between meetings, the Chairperson, the Principal, the Board of Management secretary and the Treasurer should communicate frequently;
11. The Chairperson reports back at the next meeting on issues and any decisions taken in between meetings by the officers of the Board and the Principal Teacher;
12. The Board of Management is required under the Education Act (S.26.3) to assist the parents in the formation of a Parents' Association. Information and assistance can be obtained from NPC-P Head Office, 12 Marlborough Court, Dublin 1, telephone (01) 887 4034, www.npc.ie;
13. The Board members should have a good working relationship with the Parents' Association, the teaching staff, the school staff, the Patron and the School Trustees;
14. The Board should arrange meetings with the school staff, the Parents' Association and the school Trustees from time to time;
15. Boards should be fair and consistent in making decisions on issues that affect the school staff, the pupils, parents and school Trustees;
16. Boards should host an annual celebration with the staff and Parents' Association;
17. Under the Education Act, the Board is required to prepare an Annual Financial Report which is made available to the Parents' Association, Patron, School Trustees, Minister for Education and Skills and officials of the DES;
18. The Board of Management manages the school as 'a body corporate' on behalf of the Patron in accordance with the regulations of the Minister for Education and Skills.

A Framework of Roles within an Effective and Efficient Board of Management

Below is a suggested 'menu' of delegated duties to share the workload of the Board of Management among the members of the Board. Overall responsibility still rests collectively with the Board of Management as a 'corporate unit'.

Chairperson

Responsibilities include:

- Chairing Board of Management meetings
- Official correspondence on behalf of school
- Liaising with the Principal Teacher between meetings
- Recruitment and employment-related issues for all school staff
- All capital projects — with Trustees' approval
- Signatures for cheques with treasurer or other member nominated by Board of Management See *GMPS 2015 – 2019* S.12(c)

Principal Teacher

See DES [Circular 16/73](#), *Education Act 1998* Section 22 & 23, and Education Amendment Act 2012, Section 6.

Responsibilities include:

- The day-to-day management of the school, staff and pupils
- All educational (teaching and learning) issues
- Providing leadership to the whole school community
- Preparing and monitoring annual budget with the Treasurer and Chairperson.
- Secretary to the Board of Management (DES [Circular 0079/2007](#)) Note The allowance payable to Principal Teachers who act as Secretaries to Boards of Management was withdrawn for new beneficiaries with



effect from February 2012 (see DES Circular 08/2013, Clause 19)

Recording Secretary

(The Recording Secretary is elected by the Board from amongst its members should the Principal not wish to act as Secretary to the Board of Management)

The duties of the Recording Secretary are confined to:

- Keeping the minutes of each meeting in an appropriate form to be retained in a safe place and to be available on request to representatives of the Patron, the Trustees and the DES.
- Setting the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Chairperson and the Principal.
- Recording the decisions of each meeting reached at meetings including the numbers of those voting for or against a motion.

Treasurer

Responsibilities include:

- Reporting to each Board of Management meeting on school finances.
- Preparing an annual budget in consultation with the Principal teacher and Chairperson.
- Liaising with Principal/school secretary re. bill payments and lodgements.
- Liaising with book-keeper/accountant re. the preparation of accounts for annual returns.

- Liaising with the bank re. School Account.

Note: Where school credit cards are issued, clear concise guidelines regarding usage of such cards should be issued to each approved user. The issue of spending limits and security of storage etc. should be clear to users. Statements should be reconciled and signed off on a monthly basis and should be accompanied by supporting receipts and details of the purpose for which the expense was incurred. See Chapter 8.

Other duties

[These are discretionary and may be allocated to other members of the Board.]

a. Maintenance matters – responsibilities include:

- Managing the cleaning staff, cleaning contractors and caretaking staff.
- Organising the cleaning/maintenance, equipment and supplies.
- Managing maintenance of the school exterior and grounds.

b. Safety matters – responsibilities include:

- Board of Management's health and safety statement.
- Provision of keys and alarm codes to staff of the school and other agreed users of the building.
- The maintenance of an appropriate security and fire alarm systems.

- Co-ordinating a list of out-of-hours key holders for the school in the event of alarm activation or access required for repairs and maintenance.
- Hire of school premises to outside groups – security, arranging keys etc.
- Other.

c. Sub-committees

- The Board of Management, particularly in bigger schools, may find it helpful to set up a number of sub-committees with specific mandates, e.g. finance sub-committee, maintenance sub-committee, building subcommittee, etc. The Board may also choose to appoint a subcommittee to report on a matter of concern to the Board of Management. Some committee members should be from the Board of Management, with the facility to co-opt a minority of members from outside the Board.
- The terms of reference of any sub-committee should be agreed by the Board of Management and clearly stated in writing. Arrangements for accountability and reporting to the Board must also be stated in writing and adhered to.
- Such sub-committees should exist for a specific purpose and for a specified limited period of time and under no circumstances should it replace the existing Board of Management.



School Self Evaluation – a Collaborative Process

Under [Circular 0039/2012](#) schools are required to engage in School Self Evaluation (SSE). This is also provided for in the Governance Manual in the section entitled “Self-Evaluation/Teaching and Learning. This is a collaborative, reflective process of internal school review which results in the drafting and implementation of a School Improvement Plan (SIP). The purpose of SSE and SIP is to improve teaching and learning outcomes for the pupils attending the school. Parents and students should be consulted when it is appropriate to do so, for example in gathering evidence about their experience of learning and about how they feel pedagogical practices might be improved in the school. The Board should ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to enable teaching staff to engage in the SSE process. The Board should also provide a summary of the school’s self-evaluation report and school improvement plan to the whole school community annually.

A dedicated website www.schoolself-evaluation.ie provides up-to-date information about school self-evaluation and contains materials and resources to support schools as they engage in the process. **The Board is strongly advised to complete a legislative and regulatory checklist and to provide this to the school community annually to evaluate the extent to which the school is adhering to its obligations.** A document entitled “[School Self Evaluation – Guidelines for Primary Schools](#)” is available to download and at page 64-67 a checklist is provided to assist Boards in this regard.

Board of Management Annual Report

The excellent work undertaken on behalf of schools by Board of Management members may often go unnoticed by the wider school community. A Board of Management may choose to issue an annual report which reflects upon its activities and achievements over the course of the school year. The 1998 Education Act S.20 & 21, the *GMPS 2015 – 2019* and SSE guidelines promote open and continuing communication between the Board of Management and the school community. The Board of Management report may be published at the end of the school year or alternatively at the beginning of the new school year. The report may be presented on the school website, issued in hard copy to parents/guardians or made available through the school and Parish office.

The topics listed below may be considered by the when drafting the content of an annual report.

1. Introduction and Overview of the school. This can include details of pupil enrolment numbers, number of teachers, SNA staff and ancillary staff in the school at the end of the school year.
2. A statement of the School Charter/Motto/ Mission Statement.
3. A list of Board of Management members and the number (or dates) of official meetings conducted over the course of the school year.
4. An account of initiatives supported by the Board of Management over the course of the year. These would include educational projects, extra-curricular activi-

ties, school celebrations and religious ceremonies that enriched the lives of the children over the course of the year. Improvements or additions to school facilities could also be listed in this section.

5. A brief overview of school policies and procedures reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management over the course of the year.
6. An overview of School Self Evaluation (SSE) and the initiatives undertaken as part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the year.
7.
 - i. Confirmation that the Board of Management has met its obligations in respect of Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Procedures. [Circular 0065/2011](#) Appendix 2 and [Circular 0045/2013](#).
 - ii. Confirmation that the Board of Management has reviewed Standardised Test Results and Pupil Attendance returns during the course of the year.
 - iii. Confirmation that school accounts have been audited/certified in line with DES guidelines.
8. Conclusion: The Board of Management may wish to acknowledge the commitment of staff, the support of the parent/guardians and the enthusiastic co-operation of the pupils who work together to make the school a centre of excellence in Catholic primary education.

It is important to note that under [Circular 0039/2012](#) the Board of Management is required to prepare a summary self-evaluation report and a summary school improvement plan and should make these available to the whole-school community.

Dissolution of a Board

The Board should be aware that under the *Education Act 1998* Section 16 and Section 17 both the Patron and the Minister have the power to dissolve the Board of Management.

Section 16 (Dissolution by the Patron)

1. *Subject to this section and to the consent of the Minister, the Patron may:*
 - a. *for good and valid reasons stated in writing to a member of a board of management remove that member from that office or;*
 - b. *if satisfied that the functions of a board are not being effectively discharged, dissolve that board.*
2. *Where a Patron proposes to remove a member of a board from that office or to dissolve a board, the Patron shall inform that member or board by notice in writing of his or her intention and the reasons therefor.*
3. *If, at the end of a period of one month after the date of the notice provided for in subsection (2), the Patron, having considered any representations made to him or her by or on behalf of the member or the board, remains of the view that the member should be removed from office or that the board should be dissolved then the Patron may, subject to the approval of the Minister, by notice in writing and stating the opinion of the Patron and the reasons therefor, remove the member from office or dissolve the board as appropriate.*

4. *A copy of every notice issued under this section and any representations made to the Patron shall be delivered to the Minister as soon as may be after it has been made.*
5. *Whenever the Patron dissolves a board, the Patron may, subject to the approval of the Minister, appoint any person or body of persons as the Patron thinks fit to perform the functions of the board.*
6. *Where a Patron removes a member of a board the resulting vacancy shall be filled in accordance with regulations made under section 14 (6).*
7. *The Patron shall provide, in accordance with section 14, for the reestablishment of a board dissolved under subsection (1) not later than six months following the dissolution or such longer period as the Patron, with the consent of the Minister, considers appropriate and when the new board has been established the functions of the dissolved board shall be re-vested in the new board and shall cease to be functions of the person or body of persons, if any, appointed under subsection (5).*

Section 17 (Dissolution by the Minister)

1. *Where;*
 - a. *the Minister is satisfied that the functions of a board are not being effectively discharged; or*
 - b. *a board wilfully neglects to comply with any order, direction or regulation of the Minister given or made under this Act; or*
 - c. *a board fails to comply with any judgment or order of any court of competent jurisdiction, the Minister may,*

by notice in writing, require the Patron to dissolve the board for reasons stated in such notice and the Patron shall dissolve the board accordingly as soon as may be after the date of such notice.

2. *Before the Minister serves a notice as provided for in subsection (1), he or she shall inform the board and the Patron of his or her intention to do so and shall consider any representations made to him or her by or on behalf of the board or the Patron within one month of informing the board and the Patron.*
3. *Whenever the Patron dissolves a board under this section, subsections (5) and (7) of section 16 shall apply.*

Commissioning a Report into the Operation of a Board of Management

Under the *Education Act 1998* Section 19 the Patron and the Minister have the power to commission a report into the operation of the Board of Management.

Section 19

1. *Where the Minister or the Patron is of the opinion that the functions of a board are not being effectively discharged, the Minister or the Patron, as the case may be, shall inform the board of that opinion and the reasons therefor.*
2. *Having considered any representations by the board, the Minister or the Patron, as the case may be, may authorise any person or persons as the Minister or the Patron may deem appropriate to report to the Minister or the Patron*

or both the Minister and the Patron on any matter arising from or relating to the operation of that board.

3. *Any person appointed to prepare a report under this section shall be entitled at all reasonable times to enter any premises occupied by the school concerned and shall be afforded every facility and cooperation by the board, the teachers and other staff of the school, including access to all records, to perform his or her functions.*
4. *A Principal or board shall supply the Patron and the Minister with such information regarding the performance of the board's functions as the Patron or the Minister, as the case may be, may from time to time require.*
5. *Where either the Minister or a Patron proposes to exercise functions under this section then:*
 - a. *the Minister shall inform the Patron; or*
 - b. *the Patron shall inform the Minister, as appropriate, of the proposed course of action.*

Obligation to inform Parents concerning the Operation and Performance of the School

The board is required under Section 20 of the *Education Act 1998* to report to parents and the school community on matters relating to the operation of the school. Section 21 of the *Education Act 1998* provides a legislative basis for the preparation and circulation to the school community of the school plan.

Section 20

A board shall establish procedures for informing the parents of students in the school of matters relating to the operation and performance of the school and such procedures may include the publication and circulation to parents, teachers and other staff and a student council where one has been established of a report on the operation and performance of the school in any school year, with particular reference to the achievement of objectives as set out in the school plan provided for under section 21.

Section 21

1. *A board shall, as soon as may be after its appointment make arrangements for the preparation of a plan (in this section referred to as the 'school plan') and shall ensure that the plan is regularly reviewed and updated.*
2. *The school plan shall state the objectives of the school relating to equality of access to and participation in the school and the measures which the school proposes to take to achieve those objectives including equality of access to and participation in the school by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs.*
3. *The school plan shall be prepared in accordance with such directions, including directions relating to consultation with the parents, the Patron, staff and students of the school, as may be given from time to time by the Minister in relation to school plans.*
4. *A board shall make arrangements for the circulation of copies of the school plan to the Patron, parents, teachers and other staff of the school.*



5 Employment

Overview

This section deals with the following issues:

- [Role of the Board of Management](#)
- [Functions of Principals and Teacher](#)
- [The Principal Teacher](#)
- [Duties of the Principal Teacher – Circular 16/73](#)
- [Appointments Checklist](#)
- [General Provisions for the Appointment of Teachers and Principals](#)
- [Offer of Appointment](#)
- [Notification to Department of Education & Skills](#)
- [Vetting](#)
- [Principal and Teachers – Relevant Circulars](#)
- [Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers](#)
- [Positive Staff Working Relations Procedures](#)
- [Work Place Relations Commission's Mediation, Conciliation and Advisory Services](#)
- [General Provisions for Appointment of SNAs](#)
- [Special Needs Assistants – Relevant Circulars](#)
- [Ancillary Staff – General Information](#)

Role of the Board of Management

The Education (Amendment) Act 2012 amends The Education Act 1998 by substituting for section 24 the following section:

Education (Amendment) Act 2012, Section 6:

24. (1) Subject to this section, the board of a recognised school—
- shall, if not already appointed, appoint a person to be Principal of the school, and
 - may appoint such and so many persons as teachers and other staff of the school as the board from time to time considers necessary for the performance of its powers and functions under this Act.
- (2) The numbers and qualifications of the teachers and other staff of a recognised school, who are, or who are to be, remunerated out of monies provided by the Oireachtas, shall be determined from time to time by the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.
- (3) The terms and conditions of employment of the teachers and other staff of a recognised school, appointed by the board and who are, or who are to be, remunerated out of monies provided by the Oireachtas, shall be determined from time to time by the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Functions of Principals and Teachers

Education Act 1998, Section 22:

The principal of a recognised school and the teachers in a recognised school, under the direction of the principal, shall have responsibility, in accordance with this Act, for the instruction provided to students in the school and shall contribute, generally, to the education and personal development of students in that school.

Without prejudice to subsection (1), the principal and teachers shall:

- encourage and foster learning in students,
- regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents
- collectively promote cooperation between the school and the community which it serves, and,
- subject to the terms of any applicable collective agreement and their contract of employment, carry out those duties that:
- in the case of teachers, are assigned to them by or at the direction of the principal, and
- in the case of the principal; are assigned to him or her by the board.

The Principal Teacher

The Education (Amendment) Act 2012 amends The Education Act 1998 by substituting for section 23 the following section:

Education (Amendment) Act 2012, Section 6:

23. (1) In addition to the functions conferred on a Principal by section 22, the Principal of a recognised school shall—
- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, including guidance and direction of the teachers and other staff of the school, and be accountable to the board of the school for that management,
 - provide leadership to the teachers and other staff and the students of the school,
 - be responsible, together with the board, parents of students and the teachers, for the creation in the school of an environment which is supportive of learning among the students and which promotes the professional development of the teachers,
 - under the direction of the board, and in consultation with the teachers, the parents and, to the extent appropriate to their age and experience, the students, set objectives for the school and monitor the achievement of those objectives, and
 - encourage the involvement of parents of students in the school in the education of those

students and in the achievement of the objectives of the school.

- (2) For the purpose of carrying out his or her functions under this Act, a Principal of a recognised school shall have all such powers as are necessary or expedient in that regard, and shall carry out his or her functions in accordance with—
 - a. be responsible for the day-to-day management
 - be responsible for the day-to-day management
 - (a) such policies as may be determined from time to time by the board of the school, and
 - (b) regulations made under section 33.
- (3) The Principal of a recognised school shall be entitled to be a member of any and every committee appointed by the board of the school.
- (4) Wherever practicable, the Principal of a recognised school shall, in exercising his or her functions under this section, consult with teachers and other staff of the school.
- (5) Where the employer of the Principal, teachers and other staff of a recognised school is a person other than the board of the school concerned, a reference in this section to a board shall be construed and have effect as if the said person were substituted for the said reference wherever it occurs.

Duties of the Principal Teacher

Circular 16/73 [Reproduced here]

Section A

1. The manager of a national school is charged with the direct government of the school, the appointment of the teachers and, subject to the Minister's approval, their removal, and the conducting of the necessary correspondence (Rule 15 (1)).
2. Subject to the authority of the manager, the principal teacher is responsible (in addition to teaching duties which may vary according to the size of the school – and which may be determined by the Minister either generally or in relation to any particular school but from which the teacher can, in no case, be completely relieved) for the discipline of the school generally, the control of other members of the teaching staff, including the co-ordination and effective supervision of their work, the organisation of the school, the keeping of the records of attendance, the promotion of pupils, the timetable arrangements and their observance, the books used by the pupils, the arrangements in connection with the Free Books Scheme for necessitous children, and all other matters connected with the school arrangements in each division (Rule 123 (4)).
3. The authority of the principal teacher for the organisation and conduct of the school derives from the authority of the manager. Subject to the authority of the manager, the overall responsibility for the day-to-day activities of the school devolves on the principal teacher.

The duties set out at Section B and C hereunder arise out of such responsibility.

Section B

The Principal Teacher and the Manager

1. The principal teacher should consult with the manager as the occasion demands and keep him/her informed on all matters concerning the school.
2. She/he should see that all lawful instructions issued by the manager are understood and carried out by the staff.
3. When a vacancy occurs on the staff, the principal teacher should make known to the manager the desirable qualifications of a new teacher, having regard to the needs of the pupils and the organisation of the school.

The General Discipline of the School

4. The principal teacher should organise supervision of the order and general behaviour of the pupils during school hours. In particular, she/he should organise and participate in the effective supervision of the pupils during breaks, lunch periods, assembly and dismissal. A table of names and times of supervision duties should be on display in the staff-room.

The Principal Teacher and the Staff

5. The principal teacher should ensure that each member of the staff carries out his/her duties in accordance with the requirements of the Rules for National Schools.

6. She/he should avail himself/herself of opportunities to visit classrooms to become familiar with the quality of the teachers' work. She/he should give encouragement, advice and teaching demonstrations or arrange for teaching demonstrations, particularly in the case of weak teachers and teachers on probation.
7. She/he should hold regular conferences with staff on matters concerning the general work of the school.
8. To enable his/her staff to keep abreast of modern educational theory and practice, she/he should, from time to time, arrange for suitable lectures, demonstrations and visits to selected schools, with the consent of the manager and on the advice of the inspector.
9. She/he should encourage the teachers of admission classes to take all reasonable steps to cooperate with the parents in easing the introduction of a child to school.

The Principal Teacher and Organisation

10. At the beginning of each school year, the principal teacher, in consultation with the staff, should plan a comprehensive scheme of work for the school, based on the requirements of an integrated curriculum.
11. After consultation with the staff, she/he should promote the pupils in accordance with the relevant sections of Rule 64 (amended) and the terms of Circular 10/67.
12. In consultation with the staff, she/he should decide on the organisation of the pupils for teaching purposes.
13. She/he should arrange a fair distribution of teaching duties among the staff, taking into account the needs

of the pupils and the abilities, experience, personality and preferences of each teacher. She/he should utilise the services of staff teachers with special qualifications or aptitudes in an organising and advisory capacity. The areas of arts and crafts, music and physical culture may be of particular relevance in this connection.

14. She/he should arrange teaching duties for himself/herself which may vary according to the size of the school. Such teaching duties may be determined by the Minister either generally or in relation to any particular school.
15. In consultation with the staff, she/he should draw up a suitable timetable and ensure its general observance, bearing in mind the degree of flexibility and freedom required by the curriculum and modern teaching methods.
16. The principal teacher should ensure that each teacher prepares a long-term scheme of work and makes appropriate short-term preparation in accordance with the comprehensive scheme for the school, taking into account the ability and attainments of the pupils assigned to him/her.
17. At the end of the month she/he should arrange that each teacher indicates in a Record of Progress that portion of his/her annual scheme of work dealt with during the month. So as to avoid unnecessary repetition of work, it should remain available in the school for at least one school year after the year to which it relates.
18. In consultation with the staff, the principal teacher should arrange for regular assessment of the pupils' progress.

19. As far as is practicable, she/he should organise the normal staff so that additional help can be provided for pupils who may require it.
20. Where pupils are appropriately placed in a special class or remedial class, the principal teacher should ensure that the pupils' progress in these classes is reviewed regularly, that there is liaison between the ordinary class teachers and the teacher of the special or remedial class and that pupils are reintegrated as soon as it is feasible to do so.
21. The principal teacher should ensure that additional opportunities and facilities are available to allow the more gifted pupils to make the fullest use of their natural abilities.
22. She/he should arrange adequate supervision and work for pupils whose teacher is absent.

The Principal Teacher and School Records

23. The principal teacher should carefully carry out all official instructions in connection with Roll Books, Daily Report Books, Registers, Teachers' Reports, School Record Cards, Annual School Reports on Pupils, the Free Books Scheme and other official records.

The Principal Teacher and Officials

24. The principal teacher should cooperate with government and local government officials in all matters relating to the schools, bearing in mind the rights of the pupils and their parents. In particular, she/he should carefully comply with the requirements of Rule 123 (6) (see Schedule II and Rule 125 (1) and (2)).



The Principal Teacher and Parents

25. The principal teacher should seek to win the confidence, cooperation and good will of the parents of his/her pupils and should be prepared to discuss with them, individually or otherwise, any matter relevant to the education of their children. At the beginning of each school year the principal teacher should discuss with the

Manager and the members of the school staff the question of group meetings of the parents of the pupils.

The Principal Teacher and Senior Pupils

26. The principal teacher should arrange for advice and guidance to pupils in their final year and to their parents of the opportunities, educational and otherwise, available to the pupils in the post-primary field.

Miscellaneous

27. The principal teacher, in consultation with the staff and having obtained the manager's prior approval, should arrange for tours and visits to places of educational interest.

28. She/he should bring to the notice of the pupils the advantages, both national and personal, of the habit of saving.

29. She/he should see that an adequate stock of books and other requisites is made available for the use of the school and for sale to the pupils.

Section C

Duties which may be Delegated

1. The effective supervision of the pupils during breaks, lunch periods, assembly and dismissal.
2. The care and safe custody of school requisites, equipment and teaching-aids.
3. Cooperation with the manager in matters relating to school maintenance, heating and cleaning, care and general appearance of school and school grounds.
4. The organisation and supervision of special and/or remedial classes.
5. Supervision and work for pupils whose teachers are absent.
6. School records and official forms.
7. Arrangements for talks and demonstrations and for visits to selected schools.
8. Arrangements, in agreement with the manager, for effective liaison with parents.
9. Arrangements for educational tours and outings.
10. The promotion of saving.
11. The supervision of school and class libraries.
12. Responsibility for organising particular areas of the curriculum throughout the school.
13. Responsibility for a particular school activity, e.g. games, choir, orchestra, drama etc.
14. Arrangements for the supervision of pupils during religious exercises.

Section D

Vice-Principal Teacher

1. The vice-principal teacher is required to assist the principal teacher in the day-to-day organisation and supervision of the school. In addition to his/her teaching duties, the vice-principal teacher should be assigned specific duties by the Manager. Before assigning such duties to the Deputy principal teacher, the manager should discuss the matter with the principal teacher. Assistant Teachers with posts of special responsibility
2. The manager should arrange, in consultation with the principal teacher, to assign specific duties to each teacher holding a post of special responsibility.

Section E

1. The list of duties at Section B and C are not exhaustive and may be amended by the Department of Education from time to time as circumstances warrant.
2. Responsibilities and duties of the principal teacher and other staff vary according to the type and size of the school. Where warranted, the Manager, in consultation with the principal teacher, may make whatever amendments to the lists of duties at Sections B and C as may be necessary to suit the particular needs of the school. [End of Extract]

Appointments Checklist

Administration in Preparation for Interviews	✓	Administration in Preparation for Interviews	✓
Boards of Management should check www.cpsma.ie for updates on procedures before proceeding to advertise any vacancy. Compliance with relevant redeployment arrangements is essential. Boards shall follow the procedures set out in Appendices D [Teachers], E [Principal] and H [Special needs assistant] of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019. Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the process.		The selection board must establish the criteria and scoring method to be used for assessment of the applications and for interview, having regard to the requirements of the particular post, prior to opening the applications received.	
Outline of job specification and skills required to fill the post are specified by Board of Management. Boards should decide in advance the desired minimum number of applicants required before proceeding to re-advertise. Boards should check if there are any specific patron requirements.		The applications shall be opened only in the presence of the Selection Board.	
A selection board should be properly constituted. The makeup of the selection board depends on the category of post to be filled e.g. for the appointment of a Principal the selection board should comprise the Chairperson and at least two independent assessors nominated by the patron, whereas for a teacher the selection board is made up of the Principal, Chairperson and one independent assessor nominated by the patron. In the case of a Special needs assistant (SNA) it should be the Principal, Chairperson and an independent assessor nominated by the patron.		The selection board must ensure that no member of it stands in any relationship to any candidate. Please refer to Section 6.2(f), p.56 Appendix D [Teacher], Section 4.3 (f), p.66/67 Appendix E [Principal] and Section 7.6, p.77/78 Appendix H [SNA] of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019.	
A copy of the advertisement should be available to each member of selection board and should be retained on the personnel file of the successful candidate.		The selection board must determine those applicants (who are duly qualified) to be called for interview. (If three or less have applied, all eligible applicants must be called). Where the minimum number [if specified by BoM] is not met, the position should be re-advertised.	
Applications Forms etc. of all candidates should be date stamped with the date of receipt of same and should be available for each member of the selection board. Boards who propose to accept applications by e-mail should follow the guidelines set out on p.54/55 [Teachers], p.65 [Principal] and p.75/76 [SNA] of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019.		Questions and 'ideal' responses should be prepared by the selection board in advance of the interview.	
The selection board must have gender balance – at least one man and one woman.		Agreed dates/venues for the interview/s is/are arranged.	

Administration after Short listing	✓
Short listed candidates should be invited for interview, in writing, giving seven days' notice of a specific interview time (outside of school hours) and location, as appropriate. (Date of interview is normally within 3 calendar weeks of the latest date for receipt of applications).	
Details of established criteria and a copy of the schedule for a Catholic school (as appropriate) should be sent to candidates called for interview.	
Additional materials/certification from candidates is requested, if required e.g. Teaching Council registration, Certificate to teach religion or its equivalent. [cf. Pages 30–32]	
Selection board members are supplied with timetable for interviews allowing sufficient time between candidates.	
Individual marking sheets for each member of the selection board and summary sheet for total marks are prepared. Assessors should be referred to as Assessor A, B and C. Agreed questions and desired answers should be on separate pages with no reference to interview candidates written on these sheets.	

Interviews	
Has the Selection Board/Chairperson...	✓
• Organised the interview room appropriately for adults (good seating, heating, lighting, accessibility and ventilation)?	
• Organised a comfortable waiting area – i.e. rest room/s, newspaper, water etc.?	
• Clarified receptionist's role (the receptionist/secretary has no role in the interview process and must not comment, on any aspect of the process, to candidates)?	
• Agreed on a questioning and marking system?	
• Distributed questions to each selection board member and discussed desired responses?	
• Briefed the selection board members on recording of notes during the interview of each candidate? (It is important that a clear record is kept to justify marks awarded etc., in accordance with data protection requirements)	
• Formally agreed candidate/s to be recommended to the Board of Management for appointment?	
• ensured that a form stating that the interview process has been completed is signed and collected?	
• Collected the individual marking sheets, which may subsequently be made available to the candidate on request?	

Post Interview Administration			
Has the Selection Board/Chairperson/Board of Management as appropriate ...	✓	Has the Selection Board/Chairperson/Board of Management as appropriate...	✓
Checked the references of the highest ranked candidate?		Notified the DES that the BoM has submitted the successful candidate's name to the patron and that the patron has given written approval for the appointment?	
Submitted a written report to the Board of Management setting out; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the selection procedures have been complied with, • If there has been a disclosure of interest/integrity to the Selection Board and the outcome of such disclosure, • The name of the highest ranked applicant whom it considers most suitable for appointment and • Confirmation of the receipt of suitable references for the highest ranked applicant nominated for appointment [See section 7.1, p.57, Appendix D [Teacher], section 5.1, p.68 Appendix E [Principal], section 9.2, p.79, Appendix G [SNA] and section 9.1, p. 79 Appendix H [SNA] of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019]		Informed all unsuccessful interviewees after the successful candidate has accepted the post in writing?	
The Chairperson of the Selection Board will retain; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record of the final marks and the ranking of applicants. This information shall be given to the Board of Management, if requested, as the employer. • An order of merit which can be used if the highest ranked applicant nominated for appointment declines the position (Refer to section 7.2, p.58, Appendix D[Teacher], section 5.2, p.68, Appendix E [Principal] section 9.2, p. 79, Appendix G [SNA] of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019)		Ensured that the successful candidate and chairperson have completed the relevant form and forwarded same to the DES?	
Agreed to appoint the candidate so nominated, unless there is a good and sufficient reason not to do so and such reason was not known to the selection board; in which instance the matter is referred to the patron, whose decision shall be accepted by the BoM as final?		Entered into the appropriate contractual agreement with the teacher/SNA/Other staff member?	
In the case of two or more appointments, established an order of seniority based on the order of merit determined by the selection board?		Retained an internal panel of applicants (if so stated in relevant advertisement) in order of merit deemed suitable for appointment to fill posts becoming vacant in the period of 4 months after interview in case of teachers and for the duration of the school year in the case of SNAs?	
Sought the prior written approval of the patron for the appointment of the successful candidate before he/she is notified?		Arranged for the retention of a record of criteria for short listing and notes/marks from interviews for a period of 18 months?	
Having received written approval of the patron, notified the successful candidate of his/her appointment and advised him/her that the appointment is subject to sanction of the Minister, confirmation of qualifications, registration with Teaching Council, compliance with Garda vetting requirements and pre-employment medical screening etc. prior to commencement of the employment?			

Checklist of Documents to be retained by the School Authorities

1. Teacher

(Refer to section 11.1, Appendix D, p.61 Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019)

11.1. Record of documents to be retained by school authorities

a. The following documents should be safely retained in the school:

i. Documents to be retained for all teacher appointments

1. A copy of the Registration Certificate / confirmation of current registration of the teacher from the Teaching Council of Ireland.	
2. A copy of the confirmation of medical fitness received from the Occupational Health Service.	
3. One part completed contract of employment i.e. signed by the employer and the teacher.	
4. Confirmation of compliance with relevant non-statutory vetting requirements (currently set out in Department Circular 0063/2010) and the statutory vetting requirements when they are commenced.	
5. A copy of the teacher's educational qualifications e.g. initial teacher education qualifications, Post Graduate courses or Masters Degrees.	
6. Record of the Patron's approval of the appointment.	
7. Any other relevant documentation relating to individual teaching appointments.	

ii. Documents which must also be retained following a Selection Board recruitment process.

1. A copy of the advertisement.	
2. The teacher's application for the post.	
3. Criteria for assessment of applicants.	
4. The Selection Board Report – including confirmation of verification of references from previous employers.	
5. Any documents and/or notes created by the Selection Board.	

- b. A copy of the appointment form completed by both parties that was submitted to the paymaster.
- c. All records relating to the successful applicant should be retained by the school for the duration of employment plus 7 years.
- d. Documentation should be kept for a period of 18 months for unsuccessful applicant(s), including applicants not shortlisted for interview, in accordance with Data Protection procedures.
- e. All documentation concerning the employment of registered teachers in receipt of a teacher's pension and unregistered persons should be retained for a period of 18 months and should be available for audit.

Checklist of Documents to be retained by the School Authorities (continued)

2. Principal Teacher

(Refer to section 8.1, Appendix E, p.70 Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019)

8.1. Record of documents to be retained by school authorities

a. following documents should be safely retained in the school for all Principal Teacher appointments:

1. A copy of the advertisement.	
2. The Principal Teacher's application for the post.	
3. Criteria for assessment of applicants.	
4. Any documents and/or notes created by the Selection Board.	
5. The Selection Board Report – including confirmation of verification of references from previous employers.	
6. A copy of the Principal Teacher's educational qualifications e.g. initial teacher education qualifications, Post Graduate courses or Masters Degrees.	
7. A copy of the Registration Certificate / confirmation of current registration of the Principal Teacher from the Teaching Council of Ireland.	
8. Confirmation of compliance with relevant non-statutory vetting requirements (currently set out in Department Circular 0063/2010) and the statutory vetting requirements when they are commenced.	
9. A copy of the confirmation of medical fitness received from the Occupational Health Service.	
10. Any other relevant documentation relating to individual Principal teaching appointment.	
11. Record of the Patron's approval of the appointment	
12. One part completed contract of employment i.e. signed by the employer and the Principal Teacher.	
13. A copy of the appointment form completed by both parties that was submitted to the paymaster.	

b. All records relating to the successful applicant should be retained by the school for the duration of employment plus 7 years.

c. Documentation should be kept for a period of 18 months for unsuccessful applicant(s), including applicants not shortlisted for interview, in accordance with Data Protection procedures.

General Provisions for the Appointment of Teachers and Principals

*Refer to Appendix D [Teacher] and Appendix E [Principal] of the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019* available on www.cpsma.ie

Preliminary Steps

Appendix D [Teacher], pages 49-53*

Appendix E [Principal], pages 62/63*

Advertisements

Appendix D [Teacher], page 53/54*

Appendix E [Principal], page 64*

Electronic Applications

Appendix D [Teacher], page 54/55*

Appendix E [Principal], page 65*

Composition of Selection Board

Appendix D [Teacher], page 55*

Appendix E [Principal], page 65*

Criteria of Assessment

Appendix D, [Teacher], page 55/56*

Appendix E, [Principal], page 66/67*

Interviews

Appendix D, [Teacher], page 57*

Appendix E, [Principal], page 67*

Appointment of Successful Applicant

Appendix D [Teacher], page 57/58*

Appendix E [Principal], page 68*

Appointment as a Teacher or as a Principal Teacher in convent and monastery schools

Appendix D [Teacher], page 59*

Appendix E [Principal], page 69*

Contract- Terms of Employment

Appendix D [Teacher], page 59*

Appendix E [Principal], page 69*

Fixed Term Teachers

Appendix D [Teacher], page 59/60*

Additional Terms for Fixed Term Contracts

Appendix D [Teacher], page 60*

Renewal of Fixed Term Contracts

Appendix D [Teacher], page 60*

Order of Seniority

Appendix D [Teacher], page 60*

Compliance

Appendix D [Teacher], page 60/61*

Appendix E [Principal], page 70*

Record of Documents to be Retained by School Authorities

Appendix D [Teacher], page 61*

Appendix E [Principal], page 70*

Offer of Appointment

Prior approval of the Patron must be obtained before an offer of appointment is made. Boards can log on to www.cpsma.ie – 'Appointments Section' for further guidance. Letters of Offer can be adapted for individual school use.

Sample letters are available for permanent, fixed-term, and specified purpose appointments.

Notification to Department of Education & Skills**Primary Teacher Appointment Form [PTAF]**See www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section**Panel Update Form**See www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section**On-Line Claims System**

See section 25, page 37 of Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019 available on www.cpsma.ie. Circular 0024/2013, Operational Guidelines for Boards of Management and Staff Designate to Operate the Online Claims System in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Change of Staff Form

See section 24, page 37 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019 available on www.cpsma.ie

Statutory DeclarationAvailable at www.cpsma.ie – 'Vetting Section'.**Form of Undertaking**Available at www.cpsma.ie – 'Vetting Section'.**Teacher Contracts**Refer to www.cpsma.ie for template contracts**Principal/Teacher [Permanent] contract**

This contract does not exist currently and is subject to agreement with education partners as part of the Croke Park Agreement. [Pending agreement, the successful applicant(s) should be issued with a detailed 'letter of offer'].

Fixed-Term Contracts

See www.cpsma.ie, 'Appointments Section' for template document and general information.

Specified Purpose Contracts

See www.cpsma.ie, 'Appointments Section' for template document and general information.

Contract of Indefinite Duration

See DES Circulars 0023/2015 and 82/2007, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars.

CID Adjudication Process

See DES Circulars 0023/2015 and 47/2006, available at www.cpsma.ie. Advice from CPSMA office.

Vetting

The requirement that persons applying for employment in a school must be Garda vetted currently operates on a non-statutory basis. The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons), Act 2012 (the Vetting Act) puts in place statutory requirements in relation to the vetting of persons involved in working with children and vulnerable adults, including those working in schools. However, the Vetting Act has not yet been commenced.

The Department of Education and Skills published *Circular 0026/2015 – Advance preparations for the commencement of statutory requirements for Garda vetting under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012* which outlines preparations being put in place in advance of the forthcoming statutory Garda vetting requirements. The circular provides advice for registered teachers and for school authorities on:



- a. The steps to be taken by registered teachers who intend to seek new employment in a new school immediately after the commencement of the Vetting Act and,
- b. The advance preparations and actions to be taken by all school authorities so as to facilitate, as far as possible, a smooth transition to the forthcoming statutory vetting requirements.

When circular 0026/2015 was published in April 2015 it was anticipated that the amendments to the Vetting Act would be brought before the Oireachtas in the 2015 spring/summer session and that the Vetting Act would be commenced by the Minister for Justice and Equality as soon as possible thereafter. The circular therefore advised schools and teachers that the advance preparations as indicated at (a) and (b) above should be taken by 31 July 2015. The current position (at the time of this publication going to print) is that the amendments to the Vetting Act have been brought before the Oireachtas in the current session (Spring 2016) and it is expected that following their enactment the Vetting Act will be commenced at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime schools and teachers have at least until the date on which schools close for the 2016 Easter break i.e. Wednesday, 16th March 2016* to take the advance preparations as indicated at (a) and (b) above.

Until such time as the Vetting Act is commenced Circular 0063/2010 –Recruitment procedures-requirements for Garda vetting continues to apply, at least up to the date on which schools close for the 2016 Easter break i.e. Wednesday, 16th March 2016.

Boards of Management are reminded that any appointment (teaching and non teaching) being made up to and including 16th March 2016 must fully comply with the requirements of circular 0063/2010. Boards of Management are advised to refer to www.cpsma.ie and www.education.ie for regular updates in relation to Garda vetting requirements.

*The position is being kept under review by the Department of Education and Skills and this date may be extended when the date for the commencement of the Vetting Act is confirmed.

[Circular 0026/2015](#)

[Circular 0063/2010](#)

Vetting procedures: frequently asked questions

Please note that DES Circular 63/2010 is available on www.cpsma.ie – Circulars section.

Q.1. What is Garda vetting?

A. Vetting is conducted by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU). Garda vetting does not provide clearance for persons to work with children. The function of the GCVU is to provide a statement which gives details of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed in relation to the applicant for vetting to a registered organisation (see Q.3 for the explanation of what constitutes a registered organisation).

Q.2. Where can I get details of the procedures/ requirements for Garda vetting?

A. DES Circular 63/2010.

Q.3. What is a registered organisation?

A. The GCVU does not engage directly with individual applicants or schools. This means that neither schools nor individual applicants can apply to the GCVU for vetting. The registered organisation forwards the application for vetting to the GCVU. The GCVU issues the outcome of vetting to an authorised person within a registered organisation who in turn furnishes an original/certified copy of it to the school via the school contact person. In the case of teachers the vetting process is conducted through the Teaching Council which is the registered organisation. In the case of non-teaching staff the diocesan education office/diocesan child protection office/diocesan regional office is the registered organisation. The diocesan education office will have the details of what applies in its diocese.

Q.4. Who is the school contact person?

A. This is the person designated by the Board of Management (BoM) to liaise with the authorised signatory. The school contact person will usually be the chairperson of the BoM or the principal. The BoM should also designate a person to deputise for the school contact person during his/her absence.

Q.5. Why is it important to designate a school contact person?

A. Confidentiality is absolutely essential in the processing of vetting applications and outcomes. No member of staff other than the school contact person should have sight of vetting applications or outcomes. In addition it is vital to ensure that data protection legislation is complied with and that the appropriate security systems are in place to protect the security, confidentiality and integrity of all personal data of applicants.

Copies of Garda vetting application forms must be securely filed at all times by the school contact person in a secure filing system to be accessed only by the school contact person.

No member of staff in the school other than the school contact person has authority to read, discuss or copy a Garda vetting application or outcome. In order to ensure that post containing vetting outcomes is not opened inadvertently by secretarial or other staff, designated envelopes can be used e.g. an envelope with a coded reference on it.

Q.6. Who should be vetted?

A. Any person who has or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults should be vetted. In schools all persons appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions (including volunteers etc.) of any duration must be vetted prior to commencing employment or the appointment (in the case of a volunteer) as the case may be.

Q.7. Who can be vetted?

- A. a. Any person over 18 years of age on his/her written authorisation.
- b. Where a person is between 16 and 18 years on his/her written authorisation and the written authorisation of his/her parents/guardian.
- c. A person under the age of 16 cannot be vetted.

Q.8. What happens if a person refuses to be vetted?

- A. That person cannot be appointed or engaged in any capacity i.e. not as an employee or volunteer.

Q.9. Is Garda vetting sufficient on its own?

- A. No. Thorough recruitment procedures are an essential element of child protection which includes:
 - a. interviewing
 - b. confirming identity
 - c. seeking, following up & checking references/ referees including (where applicable) the current employer
 - d. ensuring that any unexplained gaps in employment records/curriculum vitae/application form are satisfactorily accounted for
 - e. complying with vetting requirements. Vetting is only one aspect of thorough recruitment procedures.

Q.10. Does Garda vetting provide clearance for persons to work with children?

A. Garda vetting does not provide clearance for persons to work with children. It simply provides details to a registered organisation of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed in regard to the Applicant (i.e. the person being vetted).

Q.11. How does the school go about the process of having a person vetted?

- A. This depends on whether the person is a teacher or non-teacher.
 - **Teacher:** The teacher liaises directly with the Teaching Council. The teacher furnishes the school contact person with the original "vetting letter" that the teacher receives from the Teaching Council and a copy of this is retained on the teacher's personnel file. In addition the school contact person must obtain from the teacher a statutory declaration & undertaking (see Q.14 regarding what the school contact person must obtain in order to comply with vetting requirements).
 - **Non-teacher staff, contract workers & volunteers:** The school contact person furnishes the applicant with the official Garda vetting application form which the school contact person obtains directly from the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate. The completed form must be signed and returned by the applicant to the school contact person who must check it and forward it to the authorised signatory in the registered organisation (e.g. the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate).

priate). The authorised signatory checks the application form and if it is properly completed signs it and forwards it to the GCVU. The GCVU issues the vetting outcome directly to the authorised signatory who forwards the original or a certified copy of it to the school contact person.

Q.12. Does CPSMA provide Vetting Application Forms?

A. No. The school contact person must obtain official Garda vetting applications forms from the registered organisation i.e. the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate. Teachers liaise directly with the Teaching Council.

Q.13. Which teachers must be vetted & comply with vetting requirements?

- A. – All persons appointed to teaching positions (of any duration) must be vetted and comply with vetting requirements prior to commencing employment, this includes full time, part-time, permanent, temporary, substitute and newly qualified teachers
- Teachers transferring from one school to another
- Although not changing employer, any teacher who is returning to work after a leave of absence of 2 or more years
- Teachers appointed to principal positions even where the teacher is currently employed in the same school
- Teachers from the redeployment panel

Q.14. What must the school contact person obtain from the teacher in order to comply with vetting requirements?

- A. 1. **The original letter of vetting:** that the teacher receives from the Teaching Council must be provided to the school contact person by the teacher. This letter is only valid if the vetting outcome has been obtained in the same or previous calendar year. If not, the teacher will have to apply to the Teaching Council for vetting and the original vetting outcome that the teacher receives must be furnished to the school contact person. A copy of the vetting outcome should be retained on the teacher's personnel file.
2. **Statutory declaration:** (a template is in appendix 2 of Circular 63/2010). The teacher must provide the school contact person with the statutory declaration. The statutory declaration is only valid if it is dated for the same or the previous calendar year. If not, the teacher will have to furnish an up to date statutory declaration. The statutory declaration is a document which is signed by a teacher in the presence of either a notary public/commissioner for oaths/peace commissioner/practising solicitor which declares that there is nothing from a child protection perspective that would affect the position of trust in which the person would be placed. It authorises the school to make enquiries as are deemed necessary and entitles the school to terminate employment if relevant information has been omitted.
3. **Undertaking:** This is specific to the school. In the case of a teacher (where a payroll appointment form is required) the payroll appointment form incorpo-

rates the undertaking. The school contact person must ensure that the teacher signs the undertaking on the payroll form (as well as any other sections which the teacher is required to sign) and a copy of what is furnished to the DES should be retained on the teacher's personnel file. In the case of teachers where a payroll appointment form is not required, the teacher must sign an undertaking (a template of same is in Appendix 2 of Circular 63/2010). A form of undertaking is regarded as valid for other appointments to the same school if signed within the same or previous calendar year. The undertaking must be retained on the teacher's personnel file.

Q.15. Do teachers who are existing employees of the school need to comply with vetting requirements?

A. Consultations are underway with the education stakeholders regarding the introduction of procedures for the vetting for teachers who are existing employees. Until these procedures are in place schools are not required to have existing teacher employees vetted.

However as stated above, all persons newly appointed to teaching positions (of any duration) must be vetted prior to commencing employment which includes teachers who are transferring from one school to another. In addition a teacher currently working in the school who has been appointed to the principal's position, any teacher who is returning to work after a leave of absence of 2 or more years and teachers from the redeployment panel are required to comply with vetting requirements.

A teacher who is being re-employed by the same school does not have to comply with vetting requirements provided there is no gap (other than school holidays) immediately prior to re-employment and the teacher has been previously vetted & complied with the vetting requirements for the initial employment with the school.

Q.16. What is the process in relation to non-teaching staff?

A. All persons appointed to non-teaching positions of any duration must be vetted prior to commencing employment. This includes SNAs, secretaries, caretakers, cleaners, gardeners/maintenance staff, bus escorts etc. The requirement to comply with vetting requirements applies to all types of appointment i.e. full time, part time, temporary, substitute etc. Persons changing employment e.g. moving between schools etc. must also undergo vetting prior to commencing employment in the school. In addition any employee returning to work after an absence of 2 or more years must comply with vetting requirements.

Q.17. How does the school go about the process of having non-teaching/ancillary staff vetted?

A. The school contact person furnishes the applicant with the official Garda vetting application form. These forms can be obtained by the school contact person from the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate. The completed form must be signed and returned by the applicant to the school contact person. The school contact person must check the application form and forward it to the authorised signatory in the registered organisation (i.e. the relevant

diocesan/regional office as appropriate). The authorised signatory checks the application form and if properly completed signs it and forwards it to the GCVU. The GCVU issues the vetting outcome directly to the authorised signatory who forwards the original or a certified copy of same to the school contact person.

Q.18. What must the school contact person obtain from prospective non-teaching/ancillary staff in order to comply with vetting requirements?

- A. 1. **The original/certified copy of the vetting outcome from the diocesan/regional authorised signatory as appropriate.** Where the person has previously been vetted through the same diocesan/regional office (as appropriate) in the same or previous calendar year the school contact person obtains a certified copy of same from the diocesan/regional authorised signatory. This vetting outcome is only valid if the vetting outcome has been obtained in the same or previous calendar year.

If the vetting outcome is not for the same or previous calendar year or from the same diocesan/regional office, the school contact person must furnish the applicant with a vetting application form which the applicant must complete, sign and return to the school contact person who must check it and forward it to the authorised signatory. The authorised signatory checks the form and if properly completed signs it and forwards it to the GCVU. The outcome that the authorised signatory receives from the GCVU must be furnished to the school contact

person and a copy of the outcome must be retained on the person's personnel file.

2. **Statutory declaration:** (a template is in appendix 2 of Circular 63/2010) must be furnished by the proposed employee to the school contact person. The statutory declaration is only valid if it is dated for the same or the previous calendar year. If not, the proposed employee will have to furnish an up to date statutory declaration. The statutory declaration is a document which is signed by the proposed employee in the presence of either a notary public/commissioner for oaths/peace commissioner/practising solicitor which declares that there is nothing from a child protection perspective that would affect the position of trust in which the person would be placed, authorises the school to make enquiries as are deemed necessary and entitles the school to terminate employment if relevant information has been omitted.
3. **Undertaking:** This is specific to the school. In the case of an SNA the payroll appointment form incorporates the undertaking. The school contact person must ensure that the SNA signs the undertaking on the payroll form (as well as any other sections which the SNA is required to sign) and a copy of what is furnished to the DES should be retained on the SNA's personnel file. In the case of all other proposed employees, the proposed employee must sign an undertaking (a template of same is in Appendix 2 of Circular 63/2010). This undertaking must be retained on the proposed employee's personnel file.

Q.19. What happens if I cannot arrange for the vetting of the person before s/he commences employment?

A. Every effort must be made to complete the vetting process in advance of the appointment being made. However, if in certain circumstances this is not possible (for reasons outside the control of the school authority) then the prospective employee must confirm acceptance in writing that his/her appointment is subject to the satisfactory outcome of the vetting process. In such cases, the prospective employee must be informed in the letter of appointment or separately in writing that his/her appointment is subject to the satisfactory outcome of the vetting process. The prospective employee must confirm in writing his/her acceptance of this condition prior to commencing employment. Where possible, the school must minimise the occasions when such a person has unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. If, on receipt of the outcome of the vetting application and having followed appropriate due process, the BoM considers that the person is not suitable for appointment, then the appointment must be terminated. In the case of teaching staff parts A & B of Section 6 of the Primary Teacher Appointment Form must be fully completed.

Q.20. Do ancillary/non-teaching staff who are existing employees of the school need to comply with vetting requirements?

A. This will be addressed once the procedures for vetting teachers who are existing employees are in place. As stated above, consultations are underway with the education stakeholders regarding the introduction of procedures for

the vetting of teachers who are existing employees. Until procedures are in place, schools are not required to have existing ancillary/non-teaching staff vetted.

However as stated above all persons newly appointed to ancillary/non-teaching positions (of any duration) must be vetted prior to commencing employment. In addition (although not changing employment) any member of staff returning to work after a leave of absence of 2 or more years are required to comply with vetting requirements.

Q.21. Should every candidate who applies for a job be vetted?

A. No. In an employment context vetting should not be sought prior to a decision being taken to make an offer of employment and should only be sought in respect of a person to whom it is proposed to make an offer of employment. The position should be offered subject to satisfactory compliance with Garda vetting requirements. If the candidate does not have a valid vetting outcome (as set out above) the school must ensure that the application for vetting is submitted immediately following the conclusion of the selection process.

Q.22. Can I ask existing volunteers who are currently assisting the school to be vetted?

A. Yes. All volunteers (both existing and prospective) who has or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults should be vetted

Q.23. Who else in the school should be vetted?

A. Any person who has or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults e.g. volunteers, contract workers, extracurricular teachers, sports coaches etc.

Q.24. How does the school go about the process of vetting non-employees e.g. volunteers, contract workers, external tutors, extracurricular teachers, sports coaches/trainers, drama, dance & music teachers, other persons engaged by the school to assist in and support school activities etc?

- A. • The original/certified copy of the vetting outcome from the diocesan/regional authorised signatory must be obtained. To do this the school contact person must furnish the applicant with a vetting application form which the applicant must complete, sign and return to the school contact person who must check it and forward it to the authorised signatory. The authorised signatory checks the application form and if properly completed signs it and forwards it to the GCVU. The outcome that the authorised signatory receives from the GCVU is furnished to the school contact person and a copy of the outcome must be retained.
- A school should also check references and the past work experience of such persons.
 - Circular 63/2010 provides that the school can rely on the vetting conducted by the person's relevant sporting/voluntary organisation if the vetting has been conducted in the last five years. The school

must seek confirmation from the sporting or voluntary organisation that

- the person has been vetted by the organisation,
- that it is satisfied that the vetting outcome does not preclude the person concerned from working with children or vulnerable adults,
- the school authority must view and record that it has viewed this letter,
- It must also separately obtain proof of identity of the individual concerned,
- If the school contact person has any queries s/he must contact the headquarters of the relevant sporting or voluntary organisation.

Q.25. Do student teachers have to be vetted?

A. If the student teacher has or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults s/he must be vetted. Where vetting is arranged for student teachers through the relevant College, the student teacher must furnish the school contact person with the original vetting letter that s/he receives from the training college and a copy of same is retained in the school. In the absence of this the vetting is conducted through the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate.

Q.26. If there is a disclosure does that mean that the person cannot work in the school?

A. It will be a matter for the BoM to consider all of the circumstances of the case, give due weight to all relevant

factors and afford fair procedures to the individual concerned before making a decision. The fact that a person has a conviction does not automatically render him/her unsuitable for work with or access to children or vulnerable adults. The primary criterion in assessing the significance of the disclosure is its relevance to child protection. An objective and balanced approach is critical in this regard. A person's suitability should be looked at as a whole in the light of the information available including the relevance of the nature of the offence in the context of child protection. The failure of an applicant to make a disclosure in the vetting application form may also be of relevance. The Teaching Council, in the context of registration, has guidelines for assessing vetting disclosures. See www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Q.27. What happens if the vetting outcome contains a disclosure?

A. Where there is a disclosure of a conviction, non-conviction or a pending prosecution the school contact person informs the applicant in person and in private of the nature of the disclosure and seeks a response. This verification process should be proceeded with in advance of any decision being made which may affect the applicant. If the applicant disputes the content of the information there is a dispute mechanism in place. The diocesan/regional authorised signatory will resubmit the original Garda vetting application form to the GCVU for a re-check with a covering report outlining the basis of the dispute as indicated by the applicant. In any case where there has been an error in completing the original Garda vetting

application form the applicant should complete a new Garda application vetting form and both forms should be submitted with the request for a re-check. If, following the result of the further check the applicant still disputes the disclosure, arrangements will be made for further validation procedures to be undertaken in order to resolve the matters at issue in the dispute.

Q.28. What happens if the content of the disclosure is confirmed by the applicant?

A. If the content of the disclosure is confirmed by the applicant the BoM must decide whether the disclosure renders the applicant unsuitable for the position. If the Board decides to employ/retain/avail of the services of the applicant, the applicant will be informed that the original Garda vetting application outcome will be retained in the applicant's personnel file/the school's file on the applicant in a signed and sealed envelope in a secure location. If the Board decides not to employ/retain/avail of the services of the applicant, the Garda vetting application outcome will be securely destroyed.

Q.29. Can the school contact person deal with queries in relation to a vetting application by applicant over the phone?

A. No. Any discussions with an applicant regarding a vetting outcome must be in person. The vetting application must be completed in full by the applicant and signed by him/her.



Principals and Teachers – Relevant Circulars

Appointments & Probation

- Teacher Registration and Qualifications**
DES Circular 31/2011, Circular 25/2013 and Circular 52/2013 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars-Staffing Section.
- Eligibility Criteria for Appointment as a Principal Teacher** DES Circular 02/02 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Principal Section. See also Section 2 'Eligibility Criteria for Appointments as Principal' Appendix E, p.63 of *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 – 2019*.
- Seniority of Primary Teachers**
DES Circular 0015/2016, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Staffing Section.
- Release Time for Principal Teachers**
DES Circular 14/01, Circular 25/02 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Principal Section.

Note: Budget 2016 increases Principal release time to range between 15 and 25 days, depending on the school size, with effect from the 2016/2017 school year.

Size of School *	Number of Days Release Time '15/'16	Number of Days Release Time from '16/'17
Principal + 5 / 6	22	25
Principal + 3 / 4	18	20
Principal + 0 / 1 / 2	14	15

* Size of school refers to Principal and mainstream class teachers only and excludes ex-quota posts e.g. learning support, resource, disadvantageded concessionary posts etc.

- Probationary Requirements for Registration Purposes;** 'Procedures for Induction and procedures and criteria for probation 2013/2014' Teaching Council, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – NQT Section.
- Notification Requirements on Retirement**
DES Circular 14/2015, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Retirement Section.

Filling Posts of Responsibility in Primary Schools

- Procedures for Filling Posts of Responsibility** DES Circular 07/2003, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Post of Responsibility Section.
- Amendment to Assessment Criterion** DES Circular 39/2014, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Post of Responsibility Section.
- Moratorium on Filling Posts of Responsibility**
DES Circular 22/2009, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Post of Responsibility Section DES
- Clarification Note on Circular 22/2009**
available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Post of Responsibility Section
- Limited Alleviation Measures**
Circular 04/2014- See www.cpsma.ie for updates.

Positive Staff Working Relations

See page 67

- Procedures to address Staff Relations Difficulties**
For up to date information – see – www.cpsma.ie or contact CPSMA office.
- Procedures to address Bullying/Harassment**
For up to date information – see – www.cpsma.ie or contact CPSMA office.
- Grievance Procedure**
For up to date information see www.cpsma.ie or contact CPSMA office.

Sick Leave

- Sick Leave Scheme for Teachers**
DES Circular 53/2015, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Absences Section.
- OHS Standard Operating Procedures Manual** [Revised 2015] available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Absences Section.
- OHS Advice on Medical Fitness to Teach**
A Guide for Boards of Management/VEC [Revised 2011] available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Absences Section.
- Assault of Staff Members**
DES Circular 40/1997, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Assaults on Staff Section.



Family Leave

1. Teacher Absences

DES Circular 32/2007 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Absences Section.

2. Maternity Protection Entitlements For Teachers

DES Circular 0009/2013 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Absences Section.

3. Adoptive Leave Entitlements

DES Circular 18/2013 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Adoptive leave Section.

4. Parental Leave

DES Circular 26/2013, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars -Parental Leave Section.

Leave – Other

1. Career Break Scheme for Teachers

DES Circular 10/2011, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Career break Section.

2. Job Sharing Scheme for Teachers

DES Circular 75/2015, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Staffing Section.

3. Carer's Leave for Teachers

DES Circular 05/2003, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Staffing Section. Carer's leave is a statutory unpaid leave of absence providing the option to employees to absent themselves from their employment temporarily to provide care for someone in need of full-time care and attention. The terms and conditions for Carer's Leave derive from the [Carer's Leave Act](#)

[2001](#). Please note the maximum period of Carer's Leave allowable to care for one "relevant person" shall be 104 weeks unpaid leave. For teachers, the terms and conditions of Circular 05/03 apply.

4. Teacher Exchange Scheme

DES Circular 17/2015 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Staffing Section.

5. Unpaid Leave for Teachers

DES Circular 35/2010, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Staffing Section.

6. Extra Personal Vacation

DES Circulars 37/97, 32/2007 & 35/2009 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Staffing Section

7. Croke Park Agreement – Additional Hours

DES Circular 08/2011, 08/2013 & 52/2014 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Croke Park Section.

Supervision

Compulsory Participation in the Supervision Scheme

With effect from the beginning of the 2013/14 school year, participation in the Supervision scheme is compulsory for all teachers. Each teacher is required to provide 43 hours supervision per annum. This includes providing substitution cover for the absences referenced below:

Hours provided under the revised supervision scheme will, in addition to usage under the existing scheme, be used as follows:

- With effect from the commencement of 2013/14 school year – to cover all uncertified sick leave absences,

subject to appropriate alleviation measures in relation to multiple absences particularly in small schools.

- With effect from the commencement of 2014/15 school year – to cover the first day of force majeure leave and illness in family leave.

Please see [Circular 0033/2013](#).

Substitution arrangements for Self Certified Sick Leave and Force Majeure/Illness in Family absences

From the commencement of 2013/14 school year, substitute cover was not provided for any self certified leave, except in the case of multiple absences and small schools (two or less classroom teachers).

From the commencement of 2014/15 school year, substitute cover is not provided on the first day of force majeure leave/illness in family leave (save in accordance with the alleviation arrangements referenced at point 1 & 2 below).

Please note that from the beginning of the 2014/2015 school year, the following alleviation arrangements apply:

1. Substitute cover will be provided for the first day of a teacher's absence on self-certified sick leave or force majeure/illness in family leave in schools with two or less classroom teachers.
2. In the event that two or more teachers are absent on the first day of self-certified sick leave, or force majeure/illness in family leave absence, substitute cover will be provided for the second and subsequent teachers.



These alleviation measures apply on the first day of self certified illness and force majeure/illness in family leave.

Where these absences are non consecutive, each day of absence (within the allowed limits) is regarded as a first day's absence.

Summary

Self- Certified Sick leave

Substitute cover will not be provided for any self- certified sick leave. However –

Substitute cover will be provided on the first day of self- certified sick leave if:

1. The absence occurs in a school with two classroom teachers or less
or
2. The absence occurs in a school where two or more teachers are absent on the first day of self certified sick leave and/or the first day of force majeure/illness in family leave.

Note: Substitute cover will **not** be provided for consecutive self certified sick leave absences.

Where absences are non consecutive, each day of absence (within the allowed limits) is regarded as a first day's absence for substitute cover purposes.

Force Majeure/Illness in Family leave

Substitute cover will not be provided on the first day of force majeure/illness in family. However –

Substitute cover will be provided on the first day of force majeure/illness in family if:

1. The absence occurs in a school with two classroom teachers or less
or
2. The absence occurs in a school where two or more teachers are absent on the first day of self certified sick leave and/or the first day of force majeure/illness in family leave.

Note: Substitute cover will be provided for consecutive force majeure/illness in family absences, that occur after the first day of absence.

Where absences are non consecutive, each day of absence (within the allowed limits) is regarded as a first day's absence for substitute cover purposes.

Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers

Section 24(3) Education Act 1998:

- (3) A board shall appoint teachers and other staff, who are to be paid from monies provided by the Oireachtas, and may suspend or dismiss such teachers and staff, in accordance with procedures agreed from time to time between the Minister, the patron, recognised school management organisations and any recognised trade union and staff association representing teachers or other staff as appropriate.

1. **Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers**
DES Circular 60/2009 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Disciplinary Procedures Section.
2. **Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Principal Teachers**
DES Circular 60/2009 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Disciplinary Procedures Section.
3. **The Teaching Council (Amendment) Act, 2015** ("the Act") was enacted on 27 July 2015. When Part 5 (Fitness to Teach) of the Teaching Council Acts, 2001-2015 is introduced by the Minister for Education and Skills in the coming months, the Teaching Council will consider complaints about registered teachers. CPSMA will issue information for Boards of Management when "the Act" is commenced.

Positive Staff Working Relations Procedures

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

Introduction: Working Together

A key asset to any teacher is the support and security of working in a school where there are positive staff working relations. It is even more important when teachers are working in a changing environment and when society continues to make increased demands on the education sector. The primary sector has experienced a great many

changes in recent times, which include the changing nature of society's expectations of education, increased parental involvement, the impact of social change in the classroom, and changes in the promotion and management structures within schools. In that context, it has become increasingly important for teachers to support each other and to create a school climate that fosters positive working relations. Equally, each teacher must be prepared to operate as part of a team and within the authority structures of the school.

The principal Management Bodies of primary schools and the INTO are of the view that it is incumbent on the staff and management of each school to promote a culture of positive working relations at all times. Where such a culture prevails, instances of adult bullying or harassment or staff conflict rarely occur.

The principal Management Bodies and the INTO recommend that staffs and boards of management should discuss this document vis-a-vis their own working relations and adopt all or relevant aspects thereof, in accordance with the needs of the staff and management through school policies and procedures or otherwise.

Please note that, in this regard, schools that work in a multi-disciplinary context, for example, special schools, may wish to adapt the procedures in order to cater for the range of personnel in the school.

The principal management bodies involved in the preparation of this document are:

- Catholic Primary School Managers' Association;
- Church of Ireland Board of Education;

- National Association of Boards of Management of Special Schools; and
- Educate Together.

Objectives

The objectives of this document are:

- to raise awareness among school staffs about the importance of fostering positive working relations with one's colleagues;
- to recommend guidelines for good practice;
- to set out various procedures to address staff relations difficulties, adult bullying or harassment.

The policy and procedures in this document will be monitored and reviewed from time to time, to ensure satisfactory operation.

A: Recommended Good Practice

Management and INTO have identified the following key practices as being very important in the promotion of positive working relations. The presence or absence of these practices within the school can determine the school climate and culture and the dynamics of working relations among staff.

- Internal Communication:** Regular, transparent, open and direct communication should be encouraged. As part of that process, staff may wish to raise issues, as appropriate, with each other or with the principal teacher/Management. Each party should be open to hearing and addressing counter viewpoints and to responding in a constructive manner to any matters raised. There should

be regular staff meetings, i.e. at least one per term, where staff are fully aware of the agenda in advance and given an opportunity to submit items for discussion. There should be clarity about the issues discussed, the decisions taken and the agreed follow-up action. At the following staff meeting, minutes should be adopted and a report given on follow-up action.

- Processes of Decision Making:** A hallmark of positive staff working relations is the manner by which decisions are made within the school. Each staff should consider, discuss and, if appropriate, review its processes of decision making. In some instances, decisions will be relatively automatic, particularly if governed by clearly established rules and regulations, while in other cases, decisions may be made on the basis of existing custom and practice. Alternatively, and increasingly, staffs are called upon to make decisions on the basis of consultation and consensus within the school community. This is particularly the case in drafting school policies, e.g. discipline, home/school links, RSE etc.

The processes of decision-making should give due regard to the role of the principal teacher and the Board of Management in accordance with DES Circular 16/73 and other relevant legislation. In order to foster collaborative decision-making, members of staff should be willing to make constructive contributions, to listen to and respect each other's viewpoints, to be prepared to be flexible, and to compromise if necessary and to uphold the majority decision. Those chairing staff meetings should encourage such open and constructive discussions.

- c. **Effective School Policies and Procedures:** All staff should be aware of and have access to copies of school policies and procedures covering the curricular and administrative areas. Administrative policies cover such areas as dealing with parental complaints (complaints procedure), dealing with parents (home/school links), disciplining pupils, bullying among pupils, supervision, dealing with child abuse etc. There should be school policies on a wide variety of administrative matters and these should be implemented fairly and consistently, and in an open and transparent manner. It is in the staff's interests also to ensure that such policies and procedures are approved and adopted by the school's Board of Management.
- d. **Mutual Respect:** Each member of staff performs a different role in the school and each is fully entitled to be treated with professional respect and with dignity. The principal teacher is both a staff member and a team leader with overall responsibility for the day to day activities in the school. Particular functions and responsibilities may be delegated to the other management personnel in the school, e.g. Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and Special Duties Teachers. As well as being responsible for their individual classes, each teacher also has a clear responsibility for the implementation of school policies.
- e. **A Sense of Fairness:** Individual staff members should be aware of the importance of demonstrating a sense of fair play, tolerance and goodwill. Exercising sound judgement based on relevant information, common sense and reasonableness are also significant factors in promoting positive staff relations. For example, deciding to compro-

mise on a matter, rather than holding steadfast can often be the wisest and most sensible thing to do.

- f. **Unacceptable Behaviour:** There are certain behaviours which are not acceptable among staff members and which create negative staff relations. Such behaviours include workplace bullying, sexual harassment, rudeness, aggressiveness, offensive language, threatening or intimidating behaviour, victimisation and harassment. Each member of staff should respect the integrity and dignity of her/his colleagues.

Furthermore, in relation to adult bullying and sexual harassment, management and INTO recommend that each board of management/school adopt a policy and procedure that would include a clear statement that any such behaviour is not acceptable within the school. A complaint of sexual harassment or bullying may result, following investigation, in disciplinary action. However, where a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying is not upheld, no action shall be taken against the complainant, provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and the disciplinary procedure invoked. (See Section C2)

- g. **Conflict Resolution:** Conflict generally arises where two or more people disagree over issues of organisational substance and/or experience some antagonism towards each other. Principal Teachers/Management may spend significant amounts of time dealing with conflict situations, either as a third party in trying to resolve matters or as one of the parties to the conflict. In so far as the school as a workplace is concerned, it is

important to recognise that (a) over a period of time conflict is inevitable; and (b) that it is critical to resolve conflict at the earliest opportunity and before it is allowed to fester. In the vast majority of cases, teachers deploy conflict resolution skills, informally, effectively and constructively, such as:

- listening;
- identifying the source of conflict;
- addressing the issue early and in a constructive manner;
- putting forward options for resolution which may include reaching compromises;
- acknowledging if errors have been made by another party or that misunderstandings may have occurred;
- accepting solutions whether as a compromise or otherwise;
- closing the matter;
- moving on.

It is recommended that each staff foster a culture of open communication and debate, where conflict can be aired and dealt with constructively, speedily and in a reasonable manner and if possible, without recourse to the procedures set out in Section C.

B: Key Principles Underpinning all of the Procedures

It is intended that each of the procedures in Section C (1-3) will provide an overall framework to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity and preferably within the school structures. As staff relations issues and instances of bullying or discriminatory harassment vary significantly from school

to school, Section C (1) and (2), in particular, place the emphasis on the general stages that should be followed in order to resolve matters.

However, it is important to note that the following key principles or procedural points are intrinsic to each procedure:

1. **identify the difficulty**
2. **observe due process**
3. **keep records**
4. **set realistic goals and parameters**
5. **choose the appropriate procedure**

Identify the difficulty

There are similarities in relation to the range of factors that arise in primary schools where there is internal conflict among staff members. The following list comprises issues which have been identified by staff as the main areas responsible for breakdowns in staff relations:

- bullying, intimidation, victimisation, verbal abuse, sexual harassment or other forms of discriminatory harassment;
- lack of consultation, dialogue and involvement in the processes of decision-making;
- unwillingness to engage in consensus decision-making;
- lack of decision-making;
- indecisiveness;
- unwillingness to cooperate with school policy or operate as team players;
- cliques among staff;

- on-going expression of disgruntlement by internal school candidates who were unsuccessful in the competition for the Principalship or other internal promotions. Other colleagues may also express disgruntlement and this may result in a lack of cooperation with newly promoted post-holders/principal;
- a new principal introducing sweeping changes without proper consultation or meaningfully engaging staff in the process of change over realistic time frames;
- members of staff not talking to each other or not engaging in constructive communication;
- personality factors;
- lack of appropriate involvement by the board of management;
- insecurity and uncertainty among staff in the absence of the support of effective school policies, for example, in dealing with problematic areas, such as complaints against teachers, disruptive pupils etc.;
- perceptions that certain members of staff are favoured by management;
- feelings of being systematically undermined;
- staff members afraid to speak openly.

It should be noted that the above list does not purport to be final or exhaustive as it would be impossible to list every possible cause of conflict.

Observe due process

The principles of due process, natural justice and fairness underpin the three procedures outlined in Section C, (1, 2 and 3). Accordingly, if issues are raised against a member(s) of staff, she/he is entitled to be fully appraised of the issues

concerned and given an adequate opportunity to respond before any conclusions are drawn. In addition, parties should make clear to each other if they are following a particular procedure and, if so, identify the appropriate stage. Where documentation, records or submissions are being relied upon by Management or a third party, each party to the dispute or difficulty should have an opportunity to access and respond to such documentation (see paragraph below). As appropriate, a teacher may be entitled to be accompanied by a friend at meetings with the board of management or, in the event of a disciplinary hearing, may be entitled to INTO representation. Neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any hearings.

Keep Records

Records are useful, particularly in terms of identifying whether there is a pattern of difficulty or offending behaviour. However, the principles of due process and fairness should apply to the keeping of records, especially in circumstances where the records are being relied upon by a third party or a board of management in making a judgement. The following guidelines in relation to keeping records should be borne in mind:

- records should be clear, honest and accurate accounts of all relevant matters, in chronological sequence, including details of offending behaviour, attempted resolutions, meetings, discussions etc.
- a member(s) of staff, who feels bullied, aggrieved, affected by staff conflict, sexually harassed or otherwise

discriminated against in the course of her/his employment, should note/record the pattern of behaviour.

- records may form the basis of written submissions to the board of management or other appropriate third parties.
- in general, written records are confidential to the party keeping the record, except in circumstances where that party seeks to rely on such records or, for example, incorporate all or part of such records into a written submission to the board of management or other appropriate third party, e.g. a tribunal established under the Grievance Procedure. In these circumstances, and in accordance with due process, the party must be prepared to treat such records/submission in a transparent manner, in terms of furnishing copies of those records/submission to all of the relevant parties, as outlined in the various procedures.
- generally, where formal procedures involve appropriate third parties or the board of management, written submissions and/or responses may be obtained from all relevant parties and copied to all relevant parties.

Set Realistic Goals and Parameters

It is critically important to set goals and expectations within the context of realistic parameters. Unrealistic and unachievable expectations can have the contrary effect of entirely frustrating the process. In that context the following should be borne in mind:

- Changing the dynamics of working relations in a school from negative/partly negative to positive is a process which may take a considerable length of time and which will require on-going effort, compromise, flexi-

bility and constructive interaction by all those involved. Accordingly, it is reasonable to establish a framework for resolution of issues over an agreed and realistic time frame.

- The primary responsibility for promoting positive working relations in a school rests with each individual member of staff. Passivity among staff members may frustrate the promotion of positive working relations.
- Since promoting positive working relations is a process which may involve awareness raising and possible behavioural changes, it may be appropriate for members of staff to consult other relevant literature on the dynamics of workplaces, bullying, conflict resolution, the functions of leadership and management etc., and also to attend relevant training courses.
- It is an intrinsic function of effective leadership that Management, including the principal teacher, should promote positive relations. In particular, where there are relations difficulties in a school, Management should support initiatives, including training and facilitation, to deal with matters. In addition, if there is unacceptable behaviour perpetrated by one staff member against another, Management may be required to invoke disciplinary action against the teacher concerned, subject to the normal principles of due process. It is also the responsibility of Management to monitor the initiatives put in place to restore/promote positive working relations.

Choose the appropriate procedure

Having identified the difficulties, the individual member or members of staff concerned should decide on whether it is feasible and more appropriate to address matters informally between themselves or initiate one of the following procedures:

- **C1 Procedure to Address Staff Relations Difficulties.**
- **C2 Procedure to Address Adult Bullying/Sexual Harassment or Harassment on Other Specified Discriminatory Ground, arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment.**
- **C3 Grievance Procedure.**

While there are significant parallels between each of the procedures, in that, for example, each provides for:

- directly addressing matters;
- informal and formal stages;
- an emphasis on constructive engagement;
- an emphasis on early resolution, there are also some key difference, such as:
 - **Procedure 1** places the emphasis on addressing staff relations difficulties in a consensus and voluntary type approach and it includes the provision of a mediation facility;
 - **Procedure 2** is specific to the matter of allegations of bullying, sexual harassment or other specific discriminatory harassment, which may occur in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment;
 - **Procedure 3** places the emphasis on processing specific grievances that usually relate to breaches of school rules, policies, procedures or practices. It

provides that an independent tribunal may be established that is empowered to issue a decision that is final and binding on all parties.

In deciding to proceed with any one of the procedures, it is advisable that teachers and Management seek advice.

C1 Procedures To Address Staff Relations Difficulties

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

Stage 1: Informally Address Matters between the Parties

It is open to an individual teacher/group of teachers/entire staff to raise the matter of internal working relations in the school, particularly where staff relations difficulties exist.

For the purpose of this procedure, the teacher(s) who raise the matter shall be termed Party A. Party A should raise the matter with the teacher(s) who it is considered is the source of the difficulty or who is contributing to the difficulty and this may include the principal teacher, i.e. for the purpose of this procedure, Party B. The manner by which Party A decides to raise matters will, to a large extent, depend on the issues identified by the party, previous experience and the existing procedure in the school for raising matters. In general, the following steps should be taken:

- party A should identify the areas where staff relations difficulties exist or, if applicable, where relations can be improved;

- party A should raise matters at the earliest opportunity directly with party B;
- party B should make every effort to respond in a constructive manner to the issues raised by party A;
- the onus is now on both parties to engage constructively to sort out matters and it would be expected that the parties would be prepared to reach solutions and, if appropriate, move their position in order to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity;
- both parties should agree realistic time frames which should not be later than 20 school days by which time a framework for resolution of issues should be agreed;
- the outcome of the discussion should be recorded by the parties in a mutually agreeable manner (cf. Section B);
- by agreement, the twenty school-day period may be extended and the parties should take specific note of the new time frames.

Please note that if resolution is not achieved, and the principal teacher is one of the parties at Stage 1, then, where a party wishes to continue, the procedure should, after completion of Stage 1, move directly to Stage 3 or Stage 4.

Stage 2: Role of the Principal Teacher

Where it has not been possible to resolve matters informally and directly between the parties, and where the principal teacher is not a party to the conflict, the principal should be consulted by both parties as follows:

- the principal teacher should be briefed by each party on the discussions which have occurred at the informal stage;
- as part of effective leadership, the principal teacher has a role in promoting positive working relations and, accordingly, should hear the parties and seek to mediate and resolve the staff-relations difficulty;
- the principal should act in a fair and impartial manner and may exercise judgement and make decisions that she/he considers necessary to resolve matters;
- the onus is on both parties, facilitated by the principal teacher, to engage constructively to resolve matters and it is expected that the parties would be prepared to reach solutions and, if appropriate, move their position in order to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity;
- where the principal teacher deems it prudent and appropriate, she/he may raise the matter at a staff meeting and seek to initiate a framework through full staff dialogue, to resolve matters. In these circumstances, it is recommended that, where possible, a neutral member of staff or a member of staff acceptable to both parties should be selected to chair the staff meeting;
- the outcome of the discussions should be recorded by the parties, including the principal teacher, in a mutually agreeable manner (cf. Section B);
- twenty school days are provided to resolve matters at Stage 2 and the parties should note the time frames, which should only be extended by agreement.

Please note that where resolution is not achieved at Stages 1 or 2, it is open to the parties to move to Stage 3 or to go directly to Stage 4.



Stage 3: External Intervention

Where resolution has not been achieved at either Stage 1 or Stage 2, the parties and/or the principal teacher may request the board of management to appoint a mediator, agreeable to the parties. Prior to entering a mediation process, each of the members of staff concerned will be required to supply the following background information for the attention of the mediator only:

- a written account of the issues involved;
- a written account of the initiatives taken to date to resolve matters, detailing any progress made together with a general outline of the sequence of dates. Where the principal teacher has been involved at Stage 2, he/she should also supply an account;
- a list of the outstanding issues and the resolutions sought by the parties;
- a written and signed undertaking, to the effect, that he/she
 - will constructively participate in the mediation process;
 - will be flexible in order to achieve resolution;
 - will abide by and act on the recommendations of the mediator.

The mediator shall:

- review all of the documentation;
- arrange to meet with the parties;
- decide on whether it is possible to achieve a framework for resolution in light of the attitudes of the parties;
- where the mediator decides to proceed, she/he shall, following the mediation process, draft a conclusion.

The conclusion of the mediator shall solely state whether mediation has either achieved or failed to achieve a framework for resolution. The conclusion of the mediator shall be available to the parties and to the board of management.

In addition, if a framework for resolution is agreed between the parties then a copy of same may be appended to the conclusion.

As a rule, the mediator shall complete his/her work within twenty school days.

A joint INTO/MANAGEMENT panel of mediators will be established for the purpose of facilitating independent mediation.

Please note that any expenses involved at this stage will be shared by the parties, i.e. INTO and the relevant Management Body, provided that prior sanction for same has been obtained from those parties.

Stage 4: Formally Address Matters with the Board of Management

Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution at previous stages, the matter should be referred, by the parties, to the board of management for investigation. The referral should be in writing. In addition, the conclusion to the mediator may indicate that the matter should be referred to the board of management and, in this regard, the mediator's conclusion may itself constitute a referral. Once a board of management has received a written referral to investigate a staff relations difficulty, it should, generally, proceed as follows:

- the Board may enquire into the background of the difficulties, including obtaining details on the sequence of initiatives taken at previous stages;
- the Board or the chairperson of the Board may meet the teachers individually or collectively and may also request written submissions from the parties, having regard also to the principles of due process (cf. page 128);
- the Board may request the principal teacher to furnish a written submission;
- the Board may afford the parties an opportunity to present their case orally at a Board meeting, in each other's presence;
- following oral presentations, the board of management may designate the chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required or to work towards resolution;
- the board of management may convene a number of meetings in order to achieve resolution;
- the board of management shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution;
- the Board is entitled to reach conclusions and to request the parties to agree a framework for resolution in which the parties will fully and constructively participate;
- where the parties fail to voluntarily agree a framework for resolution, following a request by the board of management, the Board itself is entitled to decide on an appropriate framework for resolution and may, if considered necessary, direct the parties to participate in same;



- the board of management should complete its investigation within twenty school days of receipt of the written referral;
- the steps taken at Stage 4 should be recorded, reviewed and monitored, and the record should be available to the parties.

C2 Procedures to Address Adult Bullying/Harassment

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

The procedures set out below may be initiated in relation to any of the following circumstances, which may occur in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment:

- adult bullying
- sexual harassment
- harassment on other specified discriminatory grounds, which could in the circumstances be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

INTO and management recommend that each board of management/school adopt a policy and procedure on bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment on specified discriminatory grounds, which would include a clear statement that any such behaviour is not acceptable within the school. In this regard, it should be noted that the procedures below provide that a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying may result, following an investigation, in disciplinary action. Where a complaint of

sexual harassment or bullying is not upheld, no action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and the disciplinary procedure invoked.

The procedures outlined below are specifically designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment or harassment on other specified discriminatory grounds, in an industrial relations/domestic framework.

It is also open to any member who considers that she/he is being discriminated against, to contact her/his CEO District Representative or INTO Head Office with a view to pursuing or referring a complaint to the Director of Equality Investigations or Labour Court, as the case may be.

Adult Bullying

There is no uniform definition of workplace bullying available. The INTO policy document Relationships and the School Community/Bullying and Other Issues defines bullying as 'repeated aggressive behaviour of a verbal, physical or psychological nature'. The document also presents a range of other definitions in use by various unions and organisations and also describes the forms and effects of bullying and profiles both the typical victim and bully.

Adult Bullying can take many different forms which usually include:

intimidation or harassment
aggression
verbal abuse
humiliation

undermining
dominance or abuse of power
different or unfavourable treatment
exclusion or isolation

Key features of Adult Bullying are that the behaviour is generally:

persistent and/or systematic
unwanted
subtle
non-physical

However, for the purposes of the procedures outlined in this document, CPSMA and INTO have adopted the definition of bullying set out by the Health and Safety Authority which is:

Bullying in the workplace is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Bullying is where aggression or cruelty, viciousness, intimidation or a need to humiliate, dominate the relationships. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while to be condemned, should not be described as bullying. In the workplace environment there can be conflicts and interpersonal difficulties. Many of these are legitimate industrial relations difficulties that should be dealt with through the appropriate industrial relations channels. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and on-going should be regarded as bullying.

Accordingly, it is the view of INTO and CPSMA that the exercise of legitimate management function, in a reasonable and fair manner, does not constitute bullying.

Sexual Harassment or Other Harassment on Specified Discriminatory Grounds

The Employment Equality Act (1998) explicitly provides that sexual harassment and other harassment on legally defined discriminatory grounds is unlawful and constitutes discrimination, contrary to the Employment Act 1998. The Act (1998) defines harassment as any act or conduct which is unwelcome and offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the employee concerned, on a discriminatory ground, including spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written material or pictures.

Employers may also be liable under the 1998 legislation, in respect of harassment occurring in the course of employment, whether or not it occurs with the employers' knowledge or approval. However, the legislation also provides that it shall be a defence for an employer to show that reasonably practicable steps were taken to prevent the harassment.

It is important to distinguish harassment, including sexual harassment, from normal social interaction at work involving mutually acceptable behaviour.

Sexual Harassment

It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably than another person on ground of sex in matters relating to employment, whether in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment. Sexual harassment creates an unpleasant and intimidating work environment, threatens job security and undermines equality in the workplace. It is a form of discrimination and every effort should be made to eliminate it.

The Employment Equality Act (1998) defines Sexual Harassment as any unwelcome act, request or conduct, which could reasonably be regarded as sexually or otherwise on the ground of gender, to be offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the employee in question, such as:

- any act of physical intimacy; or
- any request for sexual favours; or
- any other conduct, such as spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials.

Discrimination may also arise if a person is treated differently in the course of his/her employment by virtue of his/her acceptance or rejection of the Sexual Harassment.

In September 1994, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform published a Code of Practice on measures to protect the dignity of women and men at work. The Code of Practice was issued in accordance with the European Commission's Code of Practice, which defined Sexual Harassment as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work'.

Other Harassment on Specified Discriminatory Grounds

The Employment Equality Act (1998) states that other harassment, whether in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, may constitute discrimination, contrary to the legislation, in circumstances where:

- the harassment arises from an employee's marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious

beliefs, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community; and

- the harassment is unwelcome and could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the employee concerned.

Harassment may constitute any act or conduct, such as spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written works, pictures or other material. Discrimination may also arise if a person is treated differently in the course of his/her employment by virtue of his/her acceptance or rejection of the harassment.

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

Bullying, Harassment/Procedures Preamble:

The procedures outlined below are designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment, or other harassment arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, in a fair and effective manner. In implementing the procedures, it is recommended that emphasis should be placed on assuring the party who considers that he/she is being bullied/harassed that his/her complaint will be acknowledged, that the matter will be investigated effectively and sensitively, and in accordance with due process.

Equally, where it is found that bullying or harassment has occurred, the emphasis, firstly, is to ensure that the offending behaviour immediately ceases and secondly, is to help the

offending party acknowledge that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and that steps must be taken to address the matter constructively, thereby avoiding any recurrence.

It is important to ensure that resolution is achieved at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, it may be appropriate for the victim or the offender to attend counselling or obtain such other help as may be required.

Stage 1: Decide to Address the Matter

1. The party (party A) who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed, or harassed on other discriminatory grounds, should decide to address the matter. However, in light of the potential effects of bullying or harassment on an individual, including the loss of confidence, extreme upset, anxiety or fear, party A may initially decide to seek INTO or other assistance, including Employee Assistance Scheme or other counselling, in order to consider the most appropriate application of the procedures in the circumstances.
2. Party A should keep a record of the pattern of behaviour, or instances where he/she considers that bullying/harassment has occurred. The record should contain details such as dates, times, persons present, details of what was said or what occurred. (Further details on the keeping of records are outlined in Section b, page 128)

Stage 2: Informally Address the Problem

1. The party who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed, or harassed on other discriminatory grounds (party A), should request a meeting with the

other party (B) in order to discuss matters. The following should apply:

- where necessary, the meeting may be facilitated by a third party, generally a teaching colleague.
 - Party A should clearly outline his/her difficulties and should clearly object to the bullying/harassment and request that it stop.
 - it is important that party A bear in mind, that the other member of staff may not be aware that his/her behaviour is causing difficulty.
 - both parties should seek to resolve their differences and establish a pattern of interaction exclusive of any forms of bullying/harassment.
 - Party B may respond to party A at that meeting or, if requested, should be given an opportunity to consider his/her response, in which case the meeting may be adjourned. Party B should respond in a constructive manner.
2. The resolution, as appropriate, may include any of the following, e.g. a commitment to cease the particular behaviour, modify the behaviour, and plan to eliminate situations where the parties would be in conflict or monitoring. Alternatively, it may emerge, as a result of the discussions between the parties, that there may have been a degree of misunderstanding in relation to certain behaviours and the resolution may make provision for compromise or appropriate explanation or acknowledgement.

3. If there is no satisfactory indication of resolution between the parties, party A should refer the complaint to Stage 3, i.e. formal procedures.

Stage 3: Principal Teacher or Chairperson of the Board of Management

1. Stage 3 provides a mechanism for the principal teacher to intervene and resolve the matter. However, if the principal teacher is one of the parties, the chairperson of the board of management should then be involved, in an individual capacity, in order to achieve resolution. In circumstances where the chairperson may also be involved at Stage 2, another member of the Board may be designated to intervene.
2. Party A should advise party B that he/she is proceeding with Stage 3.
3. Party A should state his/her complaint in writing and request the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to investigate the matter.
4. The principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) should:
 - obtain background details including details of what occurred at the previous stage;
 - consider the pattern of behaviour and the timescale;
 - hear the parties and seek to resolve the matter;
 - act in a fair and impartial manner and deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem and the principles of due process;

- exercise judgement and make decisions which he/she considers necessary to resolve matters;
5. The outcome of the discussions should be noted by the parties;
 6. The matter should be dealt with confidentially.
 7. Where resolution has not been possible and, particularly, where there is a likelihood of the offending behaviour continuing, either party or the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management as the case may be) should refer the matter to the board of management in accordance with Stage 4 below.

Stage 4: Board of Management

1. It is open to any of the parties or the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to refer the matter to the board of management for investigation. The referral should be in writing and dated, and should include a copy of the written complaint.
2. The board of management should consider the issues and investigate the matter:
 - the Board may enquire into the background of the difficulties, including obtaining details on the sequence of initiatives taken at previous stages;
 - the Board or the Chairperson of the Board may meet teachers individually or collectively and may also request written submissions from the parties, having regard also to the principles of due process (cf. page 128);
 - the Board may request the principal teacher to furnish a written submission;
3. Having considered all matters, the board of management should reach a view on the matter not later than twenty school days after receipt of the written request/referral.
4. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has not occurred, both parties should be informed accordingly. No action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and appropriate action taken.
5. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has occurred, the Board should deal with the matter appropriately and effectively. This may include:
 - the Board may afford the parties an opportunity to present their case orally at a Board meeting in each other's presence;
 - following oral presentations, the board of management may designate the chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required or to work towards resolution;
 - the board of management may convene a number of meetings in order to achieve resolution;
 - the board of management shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution and shall deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem.
6. As part of any resolution, the board of management should monitor the situation, and should put systems in place to ensure that it is kept informed that resolutions are being implemented. The board of management should keep matters under review.
 - an instruction to the offending party that he/she apologise/express regret or give an assurance that the bullying/harassment behaviour will cease;
 - seeking a commitment to attend counselling or the welfare service;
 - more serious disciplinary sanctions as may be commensurate and appropriate, such as:
 - * oral warning
 - * written reprimand
 - * written warning
 - * final written warning
 - * suspension
 - * dismissal

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

C3 Grievance Procedure

The following procedure for handling grievances in schools has been agreed between the INTO and the principal Management bodies.

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a mechanism for the resolution of a grievance which a teacher in a national school, including a principal teacher, has against

1. The board of management in respect of the exercise of any of its responsibilities for the governance of the school, or
2. the chairperson of the Board in an individual capacity, or
3. the principal teacher in respect of her/his duties and responsibilities for the organisation, conduct, and day to day activities of the school.

The Grievance Procedure shall generally relate to breaches of school rules, policies, procedures or practices. The Grievance Procedure shall not deal with curricular matters.

If a grievance, which concerns a matter covered by the Employment Equality Act (1998) or other relevant legislation, is referred to the Labour Court, this procedure shall not be used. Such a referral would serve to terminate the Grievance Procedure.

Stage 1: The Principal

1. The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the principal that the Grievance Procedure is being invoked.
2. The teacher shall discuss the grievance with the principal teacher with a view to resolving it.
3. If the grievance is not resolved within ten school days, the teacher shall be entitled to invoke Stage 2 within a further ten school days.

Stage 2: The Chairperson

1. The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the principal and chairperson of the board of manage-

ment that Stage 2 of the Grievance Procedure is being invoked.

2. The teacher shall discuss the grievance with the chairperson of the Board with a view to resolving it.
3. The chairperson shall immediately take such steps as she/he considers appropriate to have the grievance resolved informally.
4. If the grievance is not resolved within ten school days, the teacher shall be entitled to invoke Stage 3 within a further ten school days.

Stage 3 :The Board of Management

1. The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the chairperson of the board of management that Stage 3 of the Grievance Procedure is being invoked.
2. The teacher shall make a written submission which shall include the details of the grievance(s) and the redress being sought. The submission shall be presented to the chairperson for consideration by the board of management.
3. The normal rules of due process shall apply to the exchange of documentation, and accordingly, the chairperson shall copy the submission to the person against whom the grievance is being taken.
4. Where the grievance involves the principal teacher, she/he shall be requested by the chairperson to prepare a written response to the submission. The written response shall address all of the points made in the aggrieved teacher's submission and shall be furnished

to the aggrieved teacher(s) within 10 school days of the date of the written submission. Similarly, where the grievance is against the chairperson of the board of management or the Board itself, the aggrieved teacher shall be entitled to a written response from the chairperson or the Board, as the case may be. Such response shall also be furnished within 10 school days.

5. The chairperson shall invite the aggrieved teacher to be in attendance at a hearing of the Board, which shall be held within ten school days of the date of the written response. The hearing shall afford each party to the grievance an opportunity to hear, at first hand, what the other party has to say, and also to question and/or respond to the other party.
6. In circumstances where the grievance is against the principal teacher, he/she shall attend at the Board hearing in an individual capacity and not as a member of the board of management. Similarly, where the grievance is against the chairperson of the board of management (in an individual capacity) he/she shall also attend at the Board hearing in an individual capacity and an Acting chairperson shall be appointed.
Further, the principal teacher or the chairperson, as the case may be, shall withdraw from the Board's deliberations and decision making on the matter.
7. Where appropriate, the parties shall be entitled to bring witnesses. The same principles of due process apply to hearing witnesses.
8. The Board shall try to resolve the grievance by conciliation and if the grievance is resolved the matter is



concluded. If the Board is unable to resolve the grievance by conciliation it shall make a decision on the matter, except as provided under paragraph 9 below.

9. In cases where the grievance is against the Board itself, the Board shall hear the grievance as outlined above, shall try to resolve the matter by conciliation, but failing resolution, the matter may proceed to stage 4 in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 11 below.
10. The chairperson shall convey the outcome in writing to the parties within 5 school days of the hearing specified at 5 above.
11. The teacher shall have the right to invoke Stage 4 of the procedure:
 - A. if the Board fails to give a hearing to the aggrieved teacher;
 - B. if the chairperson fails to convey the outcome of the hearing within the specified period, or
 - C. if the teacher is unwilling to accept the outcome of Stage 3.

Stage 4: An Independent Tribunal

1. The Teacher who wishes to proceed with an appeal to Stage 4 shall give notice of same, by letter, to the chairperson of the board of management within ten school days of receiving the written outcome of Stage 3 (or at the end of the period specified in 3.5, if the Board fails to arrange a hearing). The date of that letter shall be referred to as the 'date of appeal', and the teacher may include, in the letter, any additional arguments he/she wishes to put forward.

2. On receipt of the letter of appeal, the chairperson of the board of management shall notify the patron (or a designated representative of the patron) and the General Secretary of the INTO (or a designated representative of the INTO) and invite these parties:
 - A. to select an agreed independent person to act as chairperson of a tribunal;
 - B. each to appoint a person who is not associated with the school to serve on the tribunal;
 - C. to arrange a meeting of the tribunal within 15 school days of the date of appeal.
3. The chairperson of the board of management shall also furnish each member of the tribunal, prior to its first meeting with
 - A. a report on the proceedings at each of the previous stages
 - B. and with
 - a copy of the aggrieved teacher's letter of appeal;
 - a copy of the aggrieved teacher's submission;
 - a copy of any written response; any other relevant documentation.
4. The Tribunal shall arrange a hearing(s) for the parties and shall ensure that the normal rules of due process and fair procedures apply, which include:
 - that the parties shall be given reasonable notice of the hearing by the Tribunal. When notifying parties of the date of the hearing(s), the Tribunal should indicate to the parties concerned that, in the event of failure to appear without reasonable cause, the

Tribunal may proceed to decide the case if considered appropriate;

- that each party shall be afforded an opportunity to access and respond to relevant documentation, including the letter of appeal;
 - that the parties shall have an opportunity to hear, at first hand, what each has to say, and also to question or respond to the other party through the chairperson of the Tribunal;
 - that witnesses may attend as appropriate;
 - that the Tribunal itself shall be entitled to question each party or seek further information;
 - that, where appropriate, the Tribunal shall afford each party an opportunity to provide further information, on the clear understanding that the other party shall have an opportunity to access and respond to same;
 - that, if necessary, the Tribunal shall agree to adjournments.
5. The Tribunal shall be considered a domestic forum and, accordingly, neither Management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any hearings.
 6. The tribunal shall be empowered to conciliate, with a view to reaching a friendly settlement.
 7. Failing such a settlement the tribunal shall determine the issue by unanimous or majority vote.
 8. The tribunal's decision shall be conveyed in writing by the chairperson of the tribunal to all the parties and shall be final and binding.

Please note that any expenses involved in Stage 4 will be shared by the parties who nominate the tribunal provided that prior sanction for same has been obtained from INTO and the relevant Management Body.

Notes

1. Until such time as the dispute is resolved or determined, the aggrieved teacher shall continue to carry out the legitimate instructions of the principal teacher or the board of management as the case may be.
2. The Grievance Procedure shall also apply where two or more teachers share a grievance.
3. Where a principal teacher, or a principal teacher and one or more other teachers, share a grievance, Stages 2, 3 and 4 of the procedure shall apply.
4. Where the grievance is against an individual chairperson or the board of management itself, Stages 2, 3 and 4 of the procedure shall apply.
5. Where there is a single Manager as opposed to a board of management, Stages 1, 2 and 4 only shall apply. In these circumstances the aggrieved teacher shall supply a written submission at Stage 4, and the normal procedures of due process will apply to the exchange of documentation and the right of response.
6. An aggrieved teacher(s) may be represented at Stages 3 and 4 by the INTO Staff Representative or by a branch or district committee member or by a teacher colleague.
7. Attention is also drawn to Clause 15 of the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011, particularly with regard to disclosure of interest.

8. Where the aggrieved teacher is a member of a religious order, the INTO will consult her/his representative association before nominating a member of the independent tribunal envisaged in Stage 4.
9. A school day is a day on which the school is in operation.
10. Any difficulty arising out of the implementation of this procedure shall be referred for resolution to the parties to this agreement.

Work Place Relations Commission's Mediation, Conciliation and Advisory Services

[SOURCE: www.workplacerelations.ie]

The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) is an independent, statutory body which was established on 1st October 2015 under the Workplace Relations Act, 2015 (No.16 of 2015). It assumes the roles and functions previously carried out by the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA), Equality Tribunal (ET), Labour Relations Commission (LRC), Rights Commissioners Service (RCS), and the first-instance (Complaints and Referrals) functions of the Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT).

The Commission's core services include the inspection of employment rights compliance, the provision of information to members of the public in relation to employment, the processing of employment agency and protection of young persons (employment) licences and the provision of mediation, conciliation, facilitation and advisory services.

Mediation Service

The WRC may be in a position to offer a mediation service in certain cases to facilitate the resolution of complaints/disputes where possible at an early stage and without recourse to adjudication. The ability of the WRC to offer mediation will depend on a number of factors including the availability of resources. Complaints/disputes may only be referred for mediation with the agreement of both parties to the complaint/dispute.

Conciliation Services

The purpose and mission of the WRC conciliation service is to provide an impartial, fast and effective conciliation service operating to a uniformly high standard in both the public and private sectors.

Conciliation is a voluntary process in which the parties to a dispute agree to avail of a neutral and impartial third party to assist them in resolving their industrial relations differences.

Advisory Services

The WRC Advisory Service promotes good practice in the workplace by assisting and advising organizations in all aspects of industrial relations in the workplace. It engages with employers, employees and their representatives to help them to develop effective industrial relations practices, procedures and structures.

Further Information

For information on any of the above services, log onto www.workplacerelations.ie



General Provisions for the Appointment of SNAs

Procedures for the Appointment of a Special Needs Assistant

Appendix H, page 73 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Advertisements

Appendix H, page 74/75 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Electronic Applications

Appendix H, page 75/76 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Composition of Selection Board

Appendix H, page 76 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Liability to Supplementary Panels

Appendix H, page 76 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Criteria Of Assessment

Appendix H, page 77/78 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Interviews

Appendix H, page 78 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Appointing the Successful Applicant

Appendix H, page 79/80 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019.

Letter of Offer on www.cpsma.ie

Order of Seniority

Appendix H, page 80 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019 and Circular 59/2006

Contracts of Employment

Appendix H, page 80 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019 and DES Circular 15/05 available on www.cpsma.ie. Contracts are available in the Appointments Section of the website.

Notification of the Appointment to the Department of Education and Skills

Appendix H, page 80 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019 available on www.cpsma.ie

Compliance

Appendix H, page 80 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Record of Documents to be Retained by School Authorities

Appendix H, page 81 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

Letter of Appointment

Sample Letter of Appointment – available on www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

Special Needs Assistant Appointment Form

Available on www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section

SNA-On-Line Claims System Information

Contact Non Teacher Payroll at DES.

Change of Staff Form

Contact Non Teacher Payroll at DES.

Special Needs Assistants – Relevant Circulars

(SNA circulars are all available at www.cpsma.ie – SNA Section)

Redundancy for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 58/2006

Seniority of Special Needs Assistants

Circular 59/2006

Note: see Circular 22/2012 (career break for SNAs) for impact of career break on seniority

Brief Absences for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 32/2010

Maternity Leave for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 17/2013

Parental Leave for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 27/2013

Adoptive Leave for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 19/2013

Career Break for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 22/2012. Please refer to:

<https://www.cpsma.ie/category/categories/appointments/appointments-appointments/> Form of Acknowledgement and Confirmation

Job Sharing for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 41/2014

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 72/2011



Public Service (Croke Park) Agreement -Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 71/2011

Supplementary Assignment Panel for SNAs

DES Circular 41/2015 (or any update thereof)

The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme to support teachers in meeting the care needs of some children with special educational needs, arising from a disability

DES Circular 0030/2014

Sick Leave for Special Needs Assistants – General Information

- DES Circular 54/2015
- OHS Standard Operating Procedures Manual [Revised 2015] available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Absences Section.
- OHS Advice on Medical Fitness to Teach A Guide for Boards of Management/VEC [Revised 2011] available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Absences Section.

Employee Assistance Service

available at www.cpsma.ie – SNA Section

SNA Contracts

Standard Contract of Employment

DES Circular 15/2005

Fixed-Term Contract

available at www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section

Specified Purpose Contract

available at www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section

Ancillary Staff – General Information

Caretaker – Contracts of Employment:

available at www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

1. Standard Contract of Employment
2. Fixed-term Contract
3. Specified Purpose Contract

Secretary – Contracts of Employment:

available at www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

1. Standard Contract of Employment
2. Fixed-term Contract
3. Specified Purpose Contract

Cleaner – Contracts of Employment:

available at www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

1. Standard Contract of Employment
2. Fixed-term Contract
3. Specified Purpose Contract

Bus Escorts – Contracts of Employment:

available at www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

1. Standard Contract of Employment
2. Fixed-term Contract
3. Specified Purpose Contract

Clerical Officers and Caretakers:

employed in National Schools under the 1978/79 scheme:

Circular 0006/2015 – parental leave entitlements

Circular 0064/2015 – revised sick leave arrangements

Standard Contract of Employment



6 The Board of Management and Others

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [The Bishop \(The Patron\)](#)
- [The Trustees](#)
- [The Parish](#)
- [The Catholic Schools Partnership](#)
- [The Pupils](#)
- [The Staff](#)
- [Ancillary Staff](#)
- [The Department of Education and Skills](#)
- [The Inspectorate](#)
- [Whole School Evaluation \(WSE\)](#)
- [Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning \(WSE – MLL\)](#)
- [The Publication Process](#)
- [Implementation of Recommendations in Evaluation Reports](#)
- [Follow Through Inspections](#)
- [Evaluating and Reporting on the Work of Probationary Teachers](#)
- [Section 24 Procedures](#)
- [The Teaching Council](#)
- [National Council for Special Education \(NCSE\)](#)
- [National Educational Psychological Service](#)
- [Tusla – Child and Family Agency](#)
- [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services](#)
- [Occupational Health Strategy](#)
- [Trade Unions](#)
- [IPPN](#)
- [Other Primary Schools](#)
- [Post-Primary Schools](#)
- [Transport](#)
- [Parents and the School](#)
- [Grievances, Complaints and Appeals](#)

Introduction

Part of the essential work of the Board of Management of a primary school is the maintenance of links with a number of people or groups. In some cases, it is sufficient for the Board to know of the existence and work of other groups. In other instances, the Board of Management will have close and important contact with those who are involved in various aspects of the work of education.

The Bishop (The Patron)

The Bishop, as leader of the Catholic community in the diocese and as the Patron of the school, has ultimate responsibility for the school. The Bishop as Patron, delegates some of his responsibility to the Board of Management which is accountable to him. There will be contact between the Board and the Patron on a number of specified issues — for instance, the appointment of the Board, the appointment of chairpersons, finance and school ethos. Patrons have a specific role in nominating members to interview selection boards and in the prior approval of appointments. See *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019 (GMPS)* Appendices D, E and H for further information.

The Patron is entitled to request reports or documentation from the school and to receive reports of whole school evaluations.

The Diocesan Secretary for primary education will usually be the link between the school and the Bishop. Minutes of meetings of the Board of Management may be seen by the Bishop as Patron and shall be made available upon request.

The Bishop as Patron should be invited to any significant event in the life of the school, e.g. opening a new school or extension, Jubilee celebrations, retirement of long-serving teachers etc. The Diocesan Secretary should be informed of any matter of interest or concern to the Board of Management that is likely to enter the public arena.

The Trustees

The Trustees of Catholic primary schools are either nominated by the Bishop in the case of parochial schools and in the case of convent and monastery schools, the Trustees are nominated by the Leadership Team of the religious congregation.

In Catholic schools the Trustees, as parties to the lease of the school, have responsibility for the following:

1. To authorise all building works to be carried out at the school. The Board of Management may act as the client for building projects but cannot enter into a building contract without written authority from the Trustees.
2. The Trustees are required to undertake that the school is insured.
3. The Trustees are responsible for managing the costs relating to all major extensions and major repairs to the school.
4. The Trustees in consultation with the Board of Management allow the school premises to be used by other groups. The permission of the Minister for Education and Science must be obtained for use of the school premises during the school day for purposes

other than primary education. Groups who use the school premises must have their own insurance and enter into a licence agreement.

5. The Trustees in consultation with the Patron, staff, Boards of Management and parents are responsible for the amalgamation of a school.
6. The Trustees, Patron and the Minister's permission must be sought before any alteration to the school premises or the school grounds takes place.

The Parish

The Catholic primary school is a parish school.

The Board of Management should facilitate and promote close pastoral links between the local priests and the teachers and pupils of the school. The local priest should visit the school regularly. By arrangement with the Principal Teacher and other teachers, he should be given access to all classes. This should normally take place during the religious instruction period but may be facilitated outside of that time, if necessary.

The role of the priest visiting the primary school is essentially a pastoral role. His work will embrace the whole school community, students, teachers and parents. His role is distinct from that of the Board of Management or that of the teacher.

In keeping with his pastoral role, he will be available to the staff by way of individual and group discussion. He will seek the cooperation of the staff members in the question of religious worship and apostolic activities.



The pastoral role of the priest in the school extends to the home of the pupils. He will make whatever informal contacts he can with the parents.

The Board of Management is encouraged to seek collaboration between the school and the parish, particularly in the preparation of the children for the Sacraments and for participation in the liturgical life of the parish community. Children would also be encouraged to become involved in appropriate ways in their parish, e.g. as altar servers, members of the junior choir etc.

The mutual help of the priest and teachers, with the support of the parents, is essential for the spiritual development of the pupils.

The Board of Management welcomes the local priest's pastoral support for the teachers themselves, particularly in times of stress or difficulty. It is helpful if the priest and the teachers can reflect and pray together about their shared vocation of caring for the young people in the school.

The Catholic Schools Partnership

The Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) is an association established by the Irish Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious of Ireland. It was formally launched in 2010. Its aims are to:

1. foster coherence in Catholic Education at a national level.
2. provide a unified voice for Catholic Education in the public forum and with educational bodies and the Government.

3. support Catholic Educators in the core activities of learning and teaching in order to foster high quality lifelong learning and faith development for all learners.
4. support the roles of Governance, Trusteeship and Management.

The CSP has a Council of thirty-three members representative of all the stakeholders in Catholic schools. This Council is charged with implementing a strategy that will achieve the aims of the CSP. The members of the Council are nominated by the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI), the Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS), the Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA) and the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS). Thus it is an umbrella body providing strategic thinking on the major issues facing Catholic schools.

The Pupils

The school exists for the pupils. The educational progress and the welfare of the children should be the overriding consideration in all decisions arrived at by the Board of Management.

The Board of Management has a duty of care to the children attending the school. This duty is exercised by the Board's promotion of the welfare of the children and by a vigilance that it is aware of difficulties and tries to eradicate or at least diminish them.

The Board of Management must ensure that the school premises are safe for pupils and teachers. The Board must

also endeavour to provide a good learning environment by maintaining the school in good structural and decorative order and by providing, within its means, for appropriate teaching aids and class requisites.

The Board of Management must ensure that the school has a code of behaviour for pupils that is drawn up in consultation with parents, known to parents and in accordance with NEWB Guidelines 2008. The code of behaviour should note that any form of bullying is unacceptable.

Members of the Board of Management should show their interest and concern to pupils by attending concerts, exhibitions, sports days etc. organised by the school, when possible.

The Staff

Staff are a most valuable and important asset to the school. If the staff are happy in their work, this will communicate itself to the pupils. Pupils learn best in a calm and positive atmosphere.

The Board of Management should meet the staff informally at least once a year.

The Board should ensure that the staff under the leadership of the Principal Teacher participates in a process of school planning in the context of the School Self Evaluation Process. The Board and the parents make an input into the school plan at appropriate stages of the process. When the plan is completed, it is submitted to the Board of



Management for approval. The school plan is reviewed at regular intervals.

The Board of Management must be aware of its obligations under the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

In the event of a difficulty arising between the Board and an individual teacher, agreed procedures should be followed in a spirit of mutual respect and concern. Please see Agreed INTO and Management Bodies Grievance Procedures [Circular 60/2009 C1, C2, C3, and 72/2011](#)

Most misunderstandings between staff, or between a staff member and the Principal Teacher, can be dealt with informally. If a staff member chooses to lodge a formal complaint to the Board of Management, the [grievance procedure](#) is to be followed.

Staff members should be encouraged to avail of useful in-service courses and to pursue their professional development.

Under the provisions of [Circular 40/2009](#), Capitation funding provided for general running costs and funding provided for caretaking and secretarial services may be regarded as a common grant from which the Board of Management can allocate according to its own priorities.

Ancillary Staff

Some primary schools have full-time or shared caretakers and/or secretaries whose salaries are paid by the Department of Education & Skills. Under the more recent (1992 and 2000) schemes, Boards of Management are given a grant towards the provision of caretaker and clerical

services. The amount of the grant is linked to the number of pupils in the school.

Arrangements for the use of the grants are left to the Board of Management. While the grants must be used for the purpose for which they are given, the actual allocation of monies as between caretaker and clerical services, rates of pay, hours of work, job description etc. are matters for the Board to decide.

Most primary schools employ cleaners. Cleaners are paid by the Board of Management out of school funds. Cleaners should have a clear job description and arrangement about hours worked, rates of pay etc. [Circular 0076/2015](#) addresses the Pay Rates (from 1 January 2016) for School Secretaries, Caretakers and Cleaners employed using Ancillary Services Grant funding.

Some schools may have bus escorts sanctioned to accompany special needs children to and from school. This service has to be applied for through the NCSE and is approved by the school SENO. The service is funded by the DES but the escort is an employee of the school. A template contract for a bus escort is available on the CPSMA website at <https://www.cpsma.ie/category/categories/appointments/>.

The attention of the Board of Management is drawn to the legislation relating to part-time and fixed term employees. It can be helpful if an individual member of the Board takes responsibility for informing the Board on various pieces of employment legislation. Explanatory leaflets and copies of relevant legislation are available on <https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/>

Template contracts are available on www.cpsma.ie

Boards of Management should not agree to omit deductions of tax and/or PRSI from the wages of any employee. State Boards are required to make their appropriate statutory deduction (see Section 8 on Finance).

The Department of Education and Skills

The Rules for National Schools 1965 were set down by the Minister for Education and Skills and may be changed from time to time by circulars issued on behalf of the Minister for Education and Skills.

Circulars are issued by the Department of Education and Skills in electronic format and can be accessed under the [Circulars and Forms section](#) of the [DES website](#). All circulars should be noted under 'Correspondence' at the regular meetings of the Board of Management and made available to staff.

It is important that the Chairperson and Principal teacher would become familiar with the different sections within the Department of Education and Skills. It is useful to learn the names of the officials dealing with the different areas.

Telephone queries to the Department of Education and Skills, other than for routine pieces of standard information, should always be followed by a letter from the Chairperson or Principal teacher as appropriate. Confirmation of any sanctions given by the Department on foot of a telephone query should always be followed up.

The Department of Education and Skills requires a number of returns (POD, Standardised Test Results, OLCS, School Annual Census) to be made by each school at regular



intervals. These would usually be prepared by the Principal teacher and signed by the Chairperson on behalf of the Board of Management. Please note that while most returns are submitted on line, the signature page of the census returns must be printed off and signed by both the Principal and the Chairperson before being returned by post to the Statistical Section of the DES.

The Department of Education determines the number of teachers to be appointed to individual schools. The 'schedule of staffing' is issued annually by the Department of Education and Skills. Some additional teachers may be appointed to some schools on the basis of special circumstances.

While the Board of Management appoints the teachers subject to a number of conditions (see [Appointments Section of CPSMA website](#)) the teachers' salaries are paid directly by the Department of Education and Skills. The Department of Education and Skills also looks after PRSI, tax deductions, universal social charge, pension-related deduction and superannuation contributions for teachers.

One of the main contacts between the Board of Management and the Department of Education and Skills is likely to concern funding, particularly capital funding if any building work is undertaken. The Department specifies procedures to be followed in a number of instances. It is essential that the board cooperates with these procedures. Please see additional information regarding [Relevant Contract Tax \(RCT\)](#) in Finance Section.

The Inspectorate

The Inspectorate is charged with evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the organisation and operation of primary and post-primary schools, including the quality of the teaching in those schools and the effectiveness of individual teachers. In addition to evaluating and reporting on the education standards in schools, the Inspectorate has an advisory and support role *vis-a-vis* the education provided. The *Education Act 1998* gives to an Inspector "all such powers as are necessary or expedient for the purpose of performing his or her functions" The Inspectorate is committed to evaluating schools and teachers in a spirit of professional collaboration and in accordance with the highest professional standards. The *Code of Practice for the Inspectorate* (2015) sets out general principles and guidelines according to which the Inspectorate evaluates and reports on the work of schools. Schools, including the teachers, Principal and Board, are required to facilitate the work of Inspectors by affording them "every reasonable facility and co-operation". The Inspectorate employs a range of external inspection models to evaluate the work of primary schools and teachers. These include Whole-School Evaluation (WSE), Whole School Evaluation – Management Leadership & Learning (WSE–MLL), Follow through Evaluations, Thematic Evaluations, Incidental Inspections, and inspection of probationary teachers on behalf of the Teaching Council.

These forms of inspections have been devised in consultation with the education partners, including the CPMSA. They are intended to complement the internal self-evaluation processes of schools. School self-evaluation is

a collaborative, reflective process of internal school review whereby the Principal and teachers in consultation with the Board of Management, parents and pupils, engage in reflective enquiry into the work of the school. The Inspectorate has developed and issued to schools detailed guidelines to assist with the cyclical process of school self-evaluation. Please refer to "[A Guide to Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning in Primary Schools](#)" © DES 2013.

Whole School Evaluation (WSE)

Whole-school evaluation is a process of external evaluation of the work of a school carried out by the Inspectorate, in order to promote school improvement. The WSE process provides a very comprehensive evaluation of the schools inspected. It involves examining the following aspects of school life:

- The quality of school management
- The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
- The quality of support for pupils

The WSE process is a collaborative one involving the inspectors on the evaluation team interacting with the Board, the Principal and teaching staff, officers of the Parents' Association, and pupils.

Meetings are held with the Board, the teaching staff, parents' representatives and members of the students' council, where one exists. Questionnaires on aspects of the work of the school are administered to parents, teachers



and pupils. Teaching and learning in classrooms and other learning settings in the school are observed. These sources of information provide inspectors with the evidence upon which their evaluative judgements about the work of the school are based.

The WSE process has three phases:

1. The pre-evaluation phase
2. The in-school evaluation phase
3. The post-evaluation phase

1. The pre-evaluation phase

Notification of the WSE is sent to the Chairperson of the Board, the Principal and Patron/Trustees by letter five weeks in advance of the evaluation. In general a WSE will not be conducted during the first two weeks of the school year or two weeks either side of the Christmas holidays. The school will be informed on the four subjects (Gaeilge, Mathematics, English and one other subject) that are focused on in classroom visits.

The Principal completes a school information form. This is forwarded to the Reporting Inspector (the Inspector leading the evaluation) together with other policy documents that may be requested, e.g. Enrolment Policy, Attendance Policy, Code of behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Special Education Needs Policy.

The Reporting Inspector schedules and conducts pre-evaluation meetings with:

- The Board of Management (including a representative of the Patron/Trustee(s) if requested by the Patron/Trustee(s))
- Up to three representatives of the Parents' Association where the association is affiliated to the National Parents Council Primary (NPCP) or
- The parents' representatives on the Board of Management where the parents association is not affiliated to the NPCP
- The teaching staff.

Board of Management pre-evaluation meeting

At the pre-evaluation meeting with the Board (and Patron's/Trustees' representative if attending):

- The WSE process is outlined
- The context of the school is considered
- The procedures and operation of the Board and the Board's work in the school are discussed
- The Board's views on aspects of the work of the school are sought
- The Board may raise and discuss issues related to the WSE

The Reporting Inspector seeks confirmation that the Board of Management has formally adopted the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Notes taken by the Inspector(s) at this pre-evaluation meeting with the Board form part of the record of evidence for the WSE and inform the WSE report.

Pre-evaluation meeting with parents

If affiliated to the NPCP, the Parents' Association may nominate up to three of its members to meet with the Inspector(s) conducting the evaluation. Where the Parents' Association is not so affiliated, the Inspector(s) meet instead with the parents' nominees on the Board of Management. At the meeting with parents, discussion of the following takes place:

- The work of the Parents' Association
- The parents' perspectives on the work of the school
- The parents' involvement in the life of the school

The work of individual teachers is not discussed at this meeting. A record of the meeting is made available to the Board and any issues raised by the parents' nominees that are pertinent to the day-to-day running of the school are referred to the Principal or Board for comment.

Pre-evaluation meeting with teaching staff

At this meeting discussion of the following takes place:

- The WSE process
- The school context



2. The In-school evaluation phase

This is the main phase of the WSE. During this phase, inspectors engage in the following evaluation activities:

A review of school documentation including those associated with school planning and school self-evaluation processes, the school improvement plan, assessment records, curriculum plans and documents associated with particular curricular programmes. Cuntais mhíosúla for the current and previous year are examined. Roll books, registers and/ or electronically stored attendance records are reviewed. Board of Management minutes for the previous three meetings are examined as are certified/ audited school accounts

- Meetings and interviews with members of the in-school management team and with the support teachers for pupils with additional learning needs. A brief meeting may also be held with SNA and ancillary staff
- Observation of teaching and learning in a range of curriculum areas and subjects throughout the school
- Interaction with pupils in classrooms and other learning settings in the school
- Review of samples of pupils' work in notebooks, copy-books, folders, workbooks, portfolios, and displays of project work
- Collection of information on the views of parents, pupils and teachers through questionnaires. Please note that teacher questionnaires are completed confidentially online and only in schools with nine or more main-stream teachers

- Provision of feedback to individual teachers regarding their work.

3. The Post-Evaluation Phase

The inspectors analyse the information gathered during the pre-evaluation and in-school phases and prepare a WSE report containing the key findings and recommendations about the quality of education provision in the school. The report affirms positive aspects of the school's work and identifies, as appropriate, areas for development. The WSE report is particularly relevant to the school's own self-evaluation processes and future school improvement plans. The findings should inform future development and improvement in the work of the school. Prior to publication of the WSE report the key findings and recommendations are discussed at two separate post-evaluation meetings:

- A meeting to which school staff members are invited
- A meeting to which the Board members, Patron's representative and the Chairperson of the Parents' Association are invited

Post-evaluation meeting with school staff

The reporting inspector presents the main findings and recommendations of the WSE. Members of staff are encouraged to discuss the outcomes of the evaluation and to clarify any information with the Inspector(s) conducting the evaluation.

Post-Evaluation meeting with the Board Members, Patron's representative and Chairperson of the Parents' Association

The reporting inspector invites the members of the Board, the Patron's representative, a representative of the Parents' Association (normally the Chairperson) to meet with the inspectors to discuss the main findings of the evaluation. The agenda for the meeting is issued in advance to the Chairperson. A record of the issues discussed at the pre-evaluation meeting with the parents is provided to the Board. These meetings provide an opportunity for discussion, feedback and clarifications on the outcomes of the inspection.

The WSE Report

The primary purpose of the WSE report is to present an evaluation of the quality of provision in the school as a whole. No person is named in the report. The report contains comment on the context of the school and presents findings with regard to each of the following:

- Quality of school management (including the work of the Board)
- The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
- The quality of support for pupils

Prior to publication of the report on the website of the Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie), the Board and Principal are provided with an electronic copy of the WSE report and are invited firstly to check the

report for factual accuracy (the factual verification process), and subsequently to respond to it (the school response process). If the option of responding to the report is availed of, the school's response will be published with the WSE report. **The publication, factual verification and school response processes are outlined following the summary of the WSE – MLL evaluation procedures.**

Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE – MLL)

This evaluation focuses on the quality of teaching, learning, leadership, management and school self evaluation (SSE). Two week's notice is given in writing of the WSE-MLL. Teaching and learning is evaluated across a range of curricular areas. The WSE-MLL model of inspection commenced in 2013.

Documentation

As in the WSE documentation and policy statements are requested prior to or examined during to the evaluation. (School Information Form, Child Protection Policy, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, SSE, Board of Management minutes, teachers timetables.)

In-school Phase

Inspectors visit classrooms (and other educational settings) to observe and evaluate teaching and learning across the curriculum. Questionnaires are distributed to pupils in selected classes and to parents or a sample of parents depending on the size of the school. **Teachers are**

requested to complete a confidential online questionnaire. Meetings are held with the Principal, ISM team, Board of Management Chairperson and the Parents Association Chair.

Post Evaluation Phase

This takes place shortly after the completion of the in-school phase. A meeting is held with the staff for feedback. The report is submitted for factual verification and is subsequently published.

The report addresses:

- The learning achievements/outcomes for the children in the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning.
- The quality of educational and other supports afforded to the pupils.
- The effectiveness of the school leadership and management.
- The effectiveness of school self evaluation.

The Publication Process

In the case of inspection (WSE and WSE MLL) reports that are published on the Department of Education and Skills website, the following process applies. It should be noted that incidental inspection reports on the work of individual schools and reports on the work of individual teachers are not published.

Factual Verification

The report is issued to the Chairperson of the Board and to the Principal teacher for factual verification. This means that they are invited to draw the attention of the Inspectorate to any errors of fact in the inspection report, using a standard factual verification form. This must be done within ten school days. On receiving the inspection report, the Chairperson of the Board, or a person authorised by him/her, should provide a copy of the report to the following persons:

- Every teacher affected by the inspection (for example, a copy of a WSE report should normally be supplied to each member of the teaching staff, including teachers shared with other schools, and to the Principal and deputy Principal)
- Every member of the Board of Management
- The school's Patron or Trustees
- It is open to the Chairperson to supply a copy of the report to other members of the staff (For example, in special schools, a copy of the report may be provided to members of multi-disciplinary teams working in the school).

School Response

The purpose of the school response is to allow the Board of Management to set out how it will use the report in the context of the school's on-going programme of self-evaluation, planning, and improvement. The Board has three options in relation to school response:



- The Board may choose to accept the report without comment
- The Board may respond formally to the findings and recommendations of the report by using the pro-forma inspection report response form. The school response must be submitted to the Inspectorate by the Chairperson of the Board. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the school response will be published in its entirety, but without the signature of the Chairperson, at the same time and in the same format as the school inspection report
- The Board may request a review of the inspection

Publication of Report

On publication of the inspection report on the Department of Education and Skills website (www.education.ie), an electronic copy of the inspection report and the school response is issued to the school Patron or Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board, the Principal and the Chairperson of the Parents' Association in the school.

Implementation of Recommendations in Evaluation Reports

Responsibility for the implementation of recommendations and improvements rests mainly with the Board of Management and the Principal of the school. The recommendations in evaluation reports can provide important direction to the Board of Management as it seeks to bring about on-going improvement in the school. The outcomes of external evaluations such as WSE or MLL

should also help to inform and complement the outcomes of a school's self-evaluation.

In a very small number of instances, it may be necessary for the Department to engage with the Patron, Trustees or management of the school to ensure that the need for improvement and change is fully appreciated by the school and those responsible for its management. The engagement of the Department with the school authorities is managed through the Department's School Governance Section with the assistance of the Inspectorate.

Follow Through Inspections

These inspections evaluate a school's response to recommendations made in a previous WSE or MLL report. A written report is issued in respect of this evaluation and this is also placed on the DES Schools Inspection website.

Review of Inspections

Section 13(9) of the *Education Act 1998* allows for a teacher or the Board of a school to "request the Chief Inspector to review any inspection carried out by an Inspector which affects the teacher or the school". Where such a request is made, the "Chief Inspector shall review the inspection in accordance with such procedures as the Chief Inspector shall determine." If the Board of Management or a teacher or both the Board and a teacher in the school seek a review of the inspection or the inspection report, the Inspectorate adheres to the Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under section 13 (9) of the Education Act, 1998. The inspection report will not be published

until the review has been completed and, if appropriate, any recommendations arising from the review have been addressed.

Thematic Evaluations

From time to time the Inspectorate may choose to evaluate a particular aspect of school provision or to focus on particular curricular programmes or services across a sample of schools. These are called thematic evaluations. An overall report is prepared that sets out the main trends and recommendations for service improvement and policy development. An example of a thematic evaluation report is the Inspectorate's, [DEIS Primary Planning Report 2011: An Evaluation of Planning Processes in DEIS Primary Schools](#). Depending on the structure of these evaluations, the Board of Management may or may not be interviewed as part of the evaluation process. In the DEIS evaluations of 2011, the Chairperson of the Board was provided with an opportunity to attend the post-evaluation meeting with the staff during which the key findings and recommendations of the evaluation were discussed.

Incidental Inspections

Incidental inspections are unannounced inspections that an inspector carries out in a school for the purpose of evaluating the quality and effectiveness of aspects of the education provided in the school under the normal conditions of a regular school day. Most incidental inspections focus on aspects of teaching, learning, pupil achievement and supports for pupils. Incidental inspections take particular account of the quality of the education

experienced by the learner. They are generally carried out by one inspector who visits a school for a full day without prior notification. Incidental inspections allow inspectors to:

- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of the work of schools
- Comment on the organisation and operation of schools
- Consult with and provide advice to teachers, principals and boards about the quality of the education provided in the school
- Support schools and teachers
- Collect data on the operation and effectiveness of schools for research or other purposes
- Assess the implementation of regulations made by the Minister
- Collect data on factors that can be used to identify schools where further inspection is required
- Monitor the progress made by a school in implementing the recommendations of earlier inspections.

The incidental inspection process is flexible and an inspector may evaluate any aspect of the school's work deemed relevant. The implementation of aspects of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2011 is also monitored. During the incidental inspection, the inspector discusses the educational provision in the school with the school Principal and evaluates the work of teachers. Visits to classrooms normally last about 1.5 hours. The focus of the visits is on

evaluating the quality of learning and teaching. The visits involve:

- Discussion with the class teacher
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Interaction with pupils
- Review of the teacher's planning and other documentation
- Feedback to the teacher

An oral report on the key findings of the incidental inspection is provided to the Principal at the end of the school day during which the inspection was conducted. This is in addition to the oral feedback provided to each class teacher in the class settings inspected.

The focus of the advice and/or recommendations provided by the inspector is usually on aspects for development that will improve the quality of the pupils' learning. Inspectors are also available to discuss the key findings of an incidental inspection with the Chairperson of the Board. Incidental inspections do not, as a matter of course, result in a written report for the school. Incidental inspection findings may be used to inform composite, national reports on aspects of teaching and learning.

Evaluating and Reporting on the Work of Probationary Teachers

The Teaching Council is the body with statutory responsibility for the registration of teachers in Ireland. In order to be registered, teachers must demonstrate

their professional competence in a school setting. The Inspectorate currently evaluates and furnishes information to the Teaching Council on the professional competence of probationary teachers. To gather that information, an inspector inspects the work of a probationary teacher during two unannounced inspection visits. Such inspection visits may occur at any time during the school year and generally last about half a school day. During the inspection visits, the inspector evaluates the teacher's effectiveness in a classroom environment and in teaching curriculum areas and subjects as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum 1999 and provides advice and oral feedback to the teacher. The inspector's final judgement regarding the professional competence of the teacher is made at the end of the second visit. Where professional competence requirements are met, the Inspectorate provides the teacher with written confirmation of this fact. A written report is not furnished to the teacher following the evaluation of his/her professional competence except in cases where professional competence requirements are not met. In such cases, the teacher is furnished with a written inspection report outlining the outcomes of the evaluation and recording advice for further development. The teacher must satisfy the Teaching Council as to his/her fulfilment of both service and professional competence requirements. When the Teaching Council is satisfied that both requirements are fully met, the Council will provide confirmation to the teacher regarding conditional or full registration as a teacher.

The Inspectorate is currently working with the Teaching Council and other education partners on "Droichead"

which a new model of induction and probation currently being piloted for primary and post primary teachers.

*See also [Teaching Council Droichead](#) process.

Section 24 Procedures

Procedures for the Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers under Section 24(3) of the *Education Act 1998* were agreed with the education partners in autumn 2009. These procedures are designed to enable school boards to take appropriate steps to deal with significant teacher professional competence difficulties that may arise. As part of the Section 24 process, and following efforts by the school management to address difficulties, the Board may ask the Chief Inspector to arrange an external review of the teacher's performance. The Inspectorate will respond to all such requests as a matter of priority and is committed to conducting its external inspections and reporting to Boards of Management speedily and effectively. Procedures in relation to professional competence issues and general disciplinary matters are set out in [Circular 0060/2009](#).

The Teaching Council

As the professional standards body for teaching, the role of the Teaching Council is to promote and regulate the profession, for the benefit of the public and the profession. The Council was established in 2006.

The core values of Council are collective professional confidence, shared professional responsibility and professionally-led regulation. In its Strategic Plan for the

period 2015-2017, the Council has also identified three pillars which underpin all of its work – Research, Reflective Practice and Relationships. The Council consists of 37 members, broken down as follows:

- 22 registered teachers, 16 of whom are directly elected and 6 of whom are nominated by the three teacher unions.
- 2 representatives of the Colleges of Education
- 2 representatives of University Departments of Education
- 2 parent representatives
- 4 school management representatives
- 5 nominees of the Minister for Education and Skills, 1 of whom is a representative of IBEC and one of whom is a representative of ICTU.

The Register of Teachers

The Council established the first comprehensive Register of Teachers in this State, at primary, post-primary and further education level. There are over 90,000 teachers currently registered. Each year approximately 3,000 teachers apply for initial registration. The Council also assesses approximately 1,200 applications every year for registration from teachers coming to work in Ireland from overseas. This involves an assessment of qualifications to make sure that they meet the same standards as teachers who studied here in Ireland.

The Register of Teachers is available to teachers and to the public on www.teachingcouncil.ie

Teaching and learning

Promoting high standards in teacher education is central to the work of the Teaching Council.

The Council advises the Minister for Education and Skills on entry criteria for programmes of Initial Teacher Education.

The Teaching Council review and accredit programmes of initial teacher education to ensure they are capable of preparing students for entry to the teaching profession. Sixty nine programmes have been reviewed by the Council in the last two years, covering primary, post-primary and further education.

Droichead

The Council is also responsible for the induction and probation of newly-qualified teachers. A new model for this process is currently being developed with over 200 schools around the country. The purpose of this process is to shape the model before it is put in place for all NQT's. *Droichead* (the Irish for bridge) is a systemic welcome for newly qualified teachers by their experienced colleagues into the most important profession in society. It is designed to reflect the importance of induction for new teachers when they are formally welcomed into the profession. Further information on Droichead can be obtained from: [Teaching Council: Droichead](#).

The Council is currently consulting on *Cosán*, the draft national framework for teachers' learning. In October 2014, the Council embarked on a consultation process with teachers to learn about their experience of professional learning. The name *Cosán*, the Irish word for pathway,



has been chosen to reflect the fact that learning is, fundamentally, a journey, and one in which the act of travelling on that journey is more important than the destination.

Promoting the profession of teaching

Alongside the regulation of the profession, the Council is responsible for promoting the profession of teaching. The Council seeks to do this in a variety of ways. Now an annual event, FÉILTE, the Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence, takes place on the first Saturday in October to coincide with World Teachers' Day. It is a visible way for the Council to acknowledge the innovative work of teachers. FÉILTE is a celebration of good teaching.

Reflecting the Council's commitment to a research-informed profession, all registered teachers are provided with free access to the [EBSCO Education Source](#) package, a collection of journals, eBooks and other research resources. This can be accessed through the Registered Teacher Login on the homepage of the Council's website, www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Professional standards

The Council is responsible for maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching in Ireland by promoting high standards in the profession. This is achieved through the publication and promotion of a [Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers](#) and the investigation of complaints.

The Code of Professional Conduct is first and foremost a clear description of what good teaching looks and feels like.

The Code is rooted in the four values of Trust, Care, Integrity and Respect. It sets out the standards of professional knowledge, skill, competence and conduct that are expected of registered teachers. The Code is a statutory document and will also act as a reference point during Fitness to Teach inquiries.

Fitness to Teach is the process that will allow members of the public, employers and others to raise serious concerns with the Council about the conduct and competence of a registered teacher. Part 5 of the Teaching Council Acts, 2001-2015, gives the Council the legal authority to investigate complaints made against registered teachers in relation to their professional conduct and fitness to teach. The Council may, following a disciplinary hearing, decide to take steps including imposing conditions on the teacher's registration, or suspend or remove the teacher from the Register of Teachers. The commencement of Fitness to Teach marks another important milestone on the journey of enhanced teaching and learning that the profession is leading. It is about improving teaching, not punishing teachers.

Unless there are good and sufficient reasons, the Teaching Council will generally not look into a complaint unless school complaint or grievance procedures (established under sections [24\[i\]](#) and [28\[ii\]](#)* of the Education Act, 1998) have been exhausted. Good and sufficient reasons may include where children or vulnerable persons are, or may be, at risk of harm. At time of writing, the provisions for school grievance procedures (Section 28 of the Education Act 1998) have not been prescribed by the Minister.

Teachers and the public need to be aware, therefore, that the Council is obliged to give due consideration to local school procedures when considering a complaint, save in exceptional circumstances. This does not necessarily mean that, on receipt of a complaint, the Council's investigation will await the outcome of those local procedures. What it does mean is that the Investigating Committee will always look to see if the issue has been dealt with in the school before it decides on its own course of action.

Conclusion

The Council is delighted to have this opportunity to inform Boards of Management about its work in helping to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning experiences for our children and young people. It acknowledges the crucial role that Boards play in supporting and guiding teachers to make a reality of this vision.

National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The NCSE is an independent agency established under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN). The NCSE support an inclusive education system that enables students and adults with special educational needs to achieve their potential. This is undertaken in a number of ways:

- The NSCE provide schools with additional supports to help students with special educational needs receive an appropriate education.



- It provides the Minister for Education and Skills with policy advice on special education.
- It commissions, conducts and shares research on all aspects of special education.
- It provides information and guidelines to parents, schools and others on special education.

Information on the resources allocated to schools, policy advice, research and information publications are available on the NCSE website: www.ncse.ie. Further information is available in Section 9.

National Educational Psychological Service

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is a service of the Department of Education and Skills. NEPS psychologists work with both primary and post-primary schools and they are concerned with learning, behaviour, social and emotional development. Each psychologist is assigned to a group of schools.

NEPS psychologists specialise in working with the school community. They work in partnership with teachers, parents and children in identifying educational needs. They offer a range of services aimed at meeting these needs, for example, supporting individual students (through consultation and assessment), special projects and research.

NEPS mission is to support the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in

education, having particular regard for children with special educational needs.

Further information can be obtained from the [NEPS website](http://www.neps.ie).

Tusla – Child and Family Agency

Arising from the enactment of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, on the 1st January 2014, the Child and Family Agency became an independent legal entity. The Child and Family Agency (the Agency) now comprises HSE Children & Family Services, Family Support Agency and the National Educational Welfare Board as well as incorporating some psychological services and a range of services responding to domestic, sexual and gender based violence.

Under the Child and Family Act, 2013, the Agency is charged with:

- supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children and the effective functioning of families;
- offering care and protection for children in circumstances where their parents have not been able to, or are unlikely to, provide the care that a child needs.
- Responsibility for ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education, and for providing education welfare services to support and monitor children's attendance, participation and retention in education.
- More details can be found at <http://www.tusla.ie/>

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is a free specialist service for children and adolescents with serious emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. CAMHS services across Ireland are run by the HSE. The service caters for young people up to 16-years-old, although some CAMHS services extend to 18-years-old, for young people in full-time education.

How to contact CAMHS?

An individual needs to be referred to CAMHS by a health professional who is familiar with them. This will usually be the individual's GP. CAMHS also accepts referrals from other senior health professionals such as public health nurses, social workers, speech and language therapists or educational psychologists.

More details can be found at [CAMHS](http://www.camhs.ie).

Occupational Health Strategy

An Occupational Health Strategy was put in place as a supportive resource for employees, to promote their health in their workplace, with a focus primarily on prevention rather than cure. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises of:

1. Employee Assistance
2. Occupational Health Service

Employee Assistance (Carecall)

The purpose of the Employee Assistance Service is to provide employees and their immediately family members with easy access to confidential counselling and to assist in coping with the effect of personal and work-related issues. The service is free and confidential and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to employees serving in primary schools.

The following services are available:

- Telephone Counselling
- Face to Face Counselling

Counselling is provided on issues such as health, relationships, addictions, bereavement, stress, conflict, critical incident and trauma. The Board of Management should ensure that all teachers, SNAs, Caretakers and Secretaries under the DES '78/'79 scheme, are aware of this service so that they may avail of the service should the need arise.

The current provider of this service is Carecall Wellbeing.

Contact details

Carecall Wellbeing
84 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1HE

Free Phone: 1800411057
www.carecallwellbeing.ie

Occupational Health Service (Medmark)

Boards of Management as employers have a duty under Section 8 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to "ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees". In order to discharge these management responsibilities effectively, it is essential that employers have access to professional occupational health advice on medical fitness. The Occupational Health Service is in place to provide employers with health advice in relation to employees in posts which are Oireachtas funded. The following are the different services offered:

- Pre-employment health assessments
- Sickness absence assessment
- Medical fitness to return to work assessments
- Ill health retirement assessments
- Critical Illness Provisions

[OHS Standard Operating Procedures: July 2015](#), aims to assist employers in accessing the services of the OHS and should be read in conjunction with the [Occupational Health Service Guide for Boards of Management](#) and sick leave circulars as appropriate.

Boards should note that failure to comply with the criteria for referring employees to the OHS may result in cessation/ withholding of substitute cover.

The current provider of this service is Medmark Occupational Health.

Contact Details

Medmark Occupational Health
28 Penrose Wharf
Penrose Quay
Cork

Phone: 1890235711
www.medmark4teachersna.ie

Trade Unions

CPSMA works with INTO, SIPTU and IMPACT in regard to employment issues for teachers, SNAs' and ancillary staff respectively.

IPPN

Irish Primary Principals Network [IPPN] is the professional support body for principals and deputy principals.

Other Primary Schools

The Boards of Management and staff of other primary schools in your area share the concerns of your Board. Informal contacts and meetings between the schools, particularly between schools in the same parish, can be helpful.

A Board of Management may not make any unilateral decision for its own school that may impinge on another school until it has consulted the diocesan authorities and, if necessary, the Boards of Management of the schools in question.



The Board of Management of a school does not have the authority to change the status of the school (i.e. single sex; co-educational; junior only; senior only; vertical etc.); any such change requires the sanction of the Bishop and of the Department of Education.

Boards are advised to refer to www.cpsma.ie for most up to date guidance on arrangements pertaining to amalgamation or to contact the CPSMA office. Ultimately the decision to amalgamate is one that resides with the Patron.

Post-Primary Schools

The Board of Management of the primary school should establish links with the management of post-primary schools to which pupils transfer. The Board should also encourage the Principal teacher of the Primary school to maintain liaison with the principals of the post-primary schools to discuss matters of mutual concern.

[Primary Circular 0027/2015](#) deals with the "Education Passport" which is now required to assist with the transfer of information in relation to pupils moving from primary to second level schools. From the academic year 2014/2015 schools are required to assemble and submit NCCA Education Passport materials in respect of every sixth class child to the relevant second level school. Confirmation of enrolment of the pupil in the second level school must be obtained prior to the submission of any data.

The Education Passport Materials include:

- a. The standard 6th class Report Card Template.

- b. The "My Profile" sheet for completion by the relevant pupils in 6th class.
- c. The "My Child's Profile sheet for completion by parents/guardians.

Please note that (a) and (b) must be completed and sent to parents/guardians by the end of the second week in June each year. Parents/guardians have the option to complete (c) and return it to the school. The completed documents (a), (b) and (c) (if returned) will be sent by the primary school to the relevant second level school preferably on or before June 30th each year.

Please go to www.ncca.ie/transfer for more details in relation to the Education Passport.

Transport

Detailed information in relation to Primary School Transport is contained in the following DES publications:

- [Primary School Transport Scheme](#)
- [School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs Arising from a Disability by the Department of Education and Science](#)

Further information can be obtained from [DES School Transport](#).

The administration of the school transport scheme at primary level is undertaken by Bus Eireann (applications, tickets, routes). The primary and post-primary schemes are co-ordinated by the chief executive officer of the local Education and Training Board, (ETB) who acts as transport

liaison officer (TLO). The TLO works in conjunction with Bus Eireann and with School Management.

The TLO should be reminded that the primary school year of 183 days is longer than that of post-primary schools. Transport should be provided for Primary school children up to the end of June each year.

Primary School Transport Scheme

Children are eligible for bus transport where they reside not less than 3.2km from and are attending their nearest national school as determined by the DES/Bus Eireann and having regard to ethos and language considerations. A minimum of ten children are required before consideration will be given to establishing/retaining a service. The parents/guardians are required to submit a completed application form for Primary School Transport to their local Bus Eireann Office. An annual charge per child applies for the service. However, this fee is waived in respect of children who hold a valid General Medical Service Scheme card. A Remote Area Grant (RAG) is available in respect of eligible children for whom no transport service is available. Concessionary transport is also available in respect of children who do not qualify for the service.

Further information at [DES School Transport](#).

School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs arising from a Diagnosed Disability.

This scheme is operated by Bus Eireann on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. Eligibility is determined

by the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO). The children concerned will have special educational needs arising from a diagnosed disability and will be attending the nearest recognised school, special school or unit that meets their educational needs. Completed applications forms must be signed by Parents/Guardians, School Principal and the SENO prior to enrolment. Forms are submitted by the SENO to the School Transport Section.

The SENO will also make a determination in relation to the requirement of a bus escort. The DES allocates funding to the school in respect of this (bus escort) service. Eligible children are exempt from charges in respect of the service. A Special Transport Grant (SRG) towards the cost of private transport arrangements may be provided in certain circumstances.

Parents and the School

In line with the provisions of the Irish Constitution, the Board of Management acknowledges that parents are the primary educators of their children. Much of the protection for Catholic schools derives from rights granted to the parents under the provisions of the Constitution.

The Board of Management should strive to ensure that parents find the school an open, welcoming, inclusive place. There should be a Parents' Association in each school. The following extract is from the *Education Act 1998*: 26

1. *The parents of students of a recognised school may establish, and maintain from among their number, a Parents' Association for that school and membership of that asso-*

ciation shall be open to all parents of students of that school.

2. *A Parents' Association shall promote the interests of the students in a school in cooperation with the board, Principal, teachers, students of a school and for that purpose may —*
 - a. *advise the Principal or the board on any matter relating to the school and the Principal or board, as the case may be, shall have regard to any such advice, and*
 - b. *adopt a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the Principal, in the operation of the school.*
3. *The board shall promote contact between the school, parents of students in that school and the community and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to parents who wish to establish a Parents' Association and to a Parents' Association when it is established.*
 - a. *A Parents' Association shall, following consultation with its members, make rules governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs.*
 - b. *Where a Parents' Association is affiliated to a national association of parents, the rules referred to in paragraph (a) shall be in accordance with guidelines issued by that national association of parents with the concurrence of the Minister.*

Parents' Associations may choose to affiliate to the National Parents' Council and should be encouraged to do so. (NPC

Primary Head Office is at 12 Marlborough Court, Dublin 1. Tel 01-887 4034; www.npc.ie.)

The Board, in consultation with the school Principal Teacher, should ensure that arrangements are made for parents to meet class teachers on a regular basis.

Parents will naturally be concerned about the welfare and progress of their own children. They are entitled to have access to records kept by the school relating to the progress and education of their child. (Section 9(g) Educational Act, 1998)

If a parent has a particular difficulty about any aspect of the school's work, the matter should be referred in the first instance to the class teacher and subsequently, if necessary, to the Principal Teacher. The matter should be dealt with informally, if possible.

If it becomes necessary to deal more formally with the matter, the [agreed complaints procedure](#) should be followed.

Anonymous complaints about the teachers or about any matter connected with the school will not be considered by the Board of Management. Individual members of the Board should not agree to bring anonymous verbal messages to the Board of Management meeting. Board members should advise people who approach them with complaints or requests that the matter should be referred to the Principal Teacher or to the Chairperson of the Board, as appropriate.

Parents Association and Fund Raising

In a spirit of collaboration and trust, parents' will recognise that there are areas of school activity that belong to the professional work of the teachers. There will also be a recognition that certain areas of responsibility (e.g. finance) belong to the Board of Management.

A Parents' Association is entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the association and to hold a bank account in the name of the Parents Association. Full accounts must be maintained and presented at the Parents' Association AGM, in accordance with the rules of the association.

Section 21(e) of the *GMPS 2015 – 2019* states that:

"A Parents' Association shall consult with the Board about any fund-raising for the school or school projects. The approval of the Board is needed prior to these funds being raised. It is good practice to record the agreement reached between the Board and the Parents' Association in relation to such fundraising, including the purpose for which the funds are being raised, the manner by which the funds are to be raised, the timeline for the transfer from the Parents' Association bank account to the Board of any funds raised and the estimated timeframe for the agreed project. The agreement should be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Management and the Parents' Association meetings respectively. The Board of Management should thereafter seek regular updates from the Parents' Association in relation to the fundraising and record those updates in the minutes of the Board meetings."

The expenditure of these funds is by the Board of Management in consultation with the Parents' Association. All monies raised or generated for an agreed project for the school should be transferred to the Board as soon as is practicable and in accordance with the agreed timeline for the transfer of funds as set out in the agreement between the Board of Management and the Parents' Association. Any funds raised must be used for the purpose(s) for which the money was collected. If in exceptional circumstances, it becomes necessary for the Board to use all of the funds collected for the purpose specified, the Board will communicate this to the Parents' Association and where appropriate, the local community. In any event the funds must be used for the school. The Board in consultation with the Parents' Association committee will decide the change of purpose for which the funds are used."

Parents and DES Circulars

The attention of parents should be drawn to the circulars that issue from the Department and which are available on the DES website www.education.ie. This could be achieved by referring the matter to the parents association.

The parents should be informed annually of the school financial situation.

Parents As Partners

The school is regarded as an extension of the home and an active partnership between parents and teachers makes this a reality, especially in the eyes of the young child, who is the central figure. Research shows that parental interests

and attitudes to school, to books and to education are the single most important influence on a child's learning, (*Working Effectively as a Parent Association – Achieving Best Practice*, NPC 2010)

<http://www.npc.ie/attachments/5b778212-7d2a-4f57-b566-6be705a7aef0.PDF>

In addition to Section 26, *Education Act 1998*, the relationship between parents and the school is referenced in several other sections of the 1998 Act.

In particular, it should be noted that under the *Education Act 1998*, the school is required to:

- Promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school – Section 9(d).
- Ensure that parents of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, have access in the prescribed manner to records kept by that school relating to the progress of that student in her/his education – Section 9(g).
- Manage the school on behalf of the Patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that Board has responsibility – Section 15(1).
- Publish, in such manner as the Board with the agreement of the Patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to

the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy, principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with – Section 15(2) (d).

- Make available to the parents the annual certified accounts of monies received from the Oireachtas and the expenditure of same. Section 18 Education Act, 1998.
- A Board shall establish procedures for informing the parents of students in the school of matters relating to the operation and performance of the school and such procedures may include the publication and circulation to parents, teachers and other staff and a student council where one has been established of a report on the operation and performance of the school in any school year, with particular reference to the achievement of objectives as set out in the school plan provided for under section 21 -Section 20.
- A Board shall, as soon as may be after its appointment, make arrangements for the preparation of a plan ("school plan") and shall ensure that the plan is regularly reviewed and updated – Section 21.

- A Board shall make arrangements for the circulation of copies of the school plan to the Patron, parents, teachers and other staff of the school. Section 21(4).

Partnership between the Parents' Association and the Board of Management

Parents are partners and stakeholders in the school. They can and should contribute to the school plan, school policies and pupils' curriculum experiences.

Research shows that parental involvement in their children's education positively affects the child's performance at school. The impact is the same regardless of ethnic background, family income, maternal level of education, or child's gender.

Both the Parent Association and the Board of Management have the best interest of the child as a common goal in the running of the school. To fulfil their duties as set out in the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management and the Parent Association need to have effective ways of communicating with one another.

Ways of communicating between the Parent Association and the Board of Management may include:

- An annual meeting, early in each school year, with a jointly planned agenda, to discuss ideas for working together, to share information and to exchange views.
- A social event where parents, teachers, and Board of Management members can meet and get to know one another.

- Meetings between the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Chairperson of the Parent Association committee.

The parent nominees elected by parents are not on the Board to represent parents but are there to manage the school. While they may bring a parental perspective to all meetings, their primary function is the managing of the school.

Attention is drawn to Section 8 of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015- 2019:

"Important Note:

Board members are not delegates of their electorates. They have no obligation to either report back to their electors or to take instruction from them on how to vote at Board meetings. Such reporting may be a breach of confidentiality requirements. It is a matter for each Board to decide what may be reported and by whom and, in this respect, it is essential that personnel, financial and personal matters are dealt with in line with relevant confidentiality requirements.

Decisions arrived at by consensus or by vote are decisions of the Board. Individual members of the Board are obliged to keep confidential the matters discussed at meetings unless otherwise agreed by the Board and where so agreed, members of the Board must not publicly criticise or make any negative public comment about Board decisions, irrespective of their own personal views on the matter."

Arrangements for Parent /Teacher and Staff meetings

Details in relation to Parent/Teacher and Staff meetings are contained in Department of Education and Skills Circular 0014/2004, available at [Primary Circular 0014/2004](#).

Grievances, Complaints and Appeals

Section 28 *Education Act 1998* states that:

1. The Minister, following consultation with patrons of recognised schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, may from time to time prescribe procedures in accordance with which —
 - a. the parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal to the Board against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school,
 - b. grievances of students, or their parents, relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under paragraph (a) or section 29), shall be heard, and
 - c. appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.
2. In prescribing procedures for the purposes of this section the Minister shall have regard to the desirability of deter-

mining appeals and resolving grievances in the school concerned.

CPSMA/INTO Agreed Parental Complaints Procedure

The CPSMA and the INTO reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage. Boards should check with CPSMA office and/or www.cpsma.ie for updates and advice as to how to proceed to deal with such complaints

Parental Complaints Procedure

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints, not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

- 1.1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
- 1.2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving it.
- 1.3. If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/ guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

- 2.1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/ guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/ he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- 2.2. The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

- 3.1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:



- a. supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
- b. arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;

- e. The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
- f. The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 (b).

Stage 4

- 4.1. If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to stage 3.1 (b).
- 4.2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the Board meeting.
- 4.3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
 - a. The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
 - b. The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
 - c. The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
 - d. The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The

Stage 5

- 5.1. When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.
- 5.2. The decision of the Board shall be final.
- 5.3. This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years;
- 5.4. CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party 3 months' notice of intention to do so.

(In this agreement 'days' means school days.)



7 Insurance, Health and Safety

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [Insurance](#)
- [Insurance of Members of the Boards of Management of Primary Schools](#)
- [Procedures and Record Keeping](#)
- [Notification of Claims](#)
- [Costs and Settlements](#)
- [Supervision of Pupils Outside Official School Opening Hours](#)
- [Risk Management – School Extensions / Construction /Alterations](#)
- [Health & Safety](#)
- [Controls](#)
- [Critical Incidents](#)
- [Accidents in Schools](#)
- [Accident Report Form](#)
- [Reporting to Health and Safety Authority \(HSA\)](#)

The following article was submitted by Allianz plc. in 2012 and reviewed in 2015

Insurance

It is the duty of the Board of Management (delegated by the Trustees) to put in place and maintain comprehensive insurance cover for the school. The Allianz School Custodian Policy is recommended to all schools.

It should be noted that where alternative insurance quotations are being considered, it is essential that there is comparison of key cover differentials. School Boards of Management are required to refer to the Patron / Diocesan Office before any decision is taken in relation to the placement of insurance cover with an Insurer other than Allianz. This protocol ensures that the legal liability of the Patron and Trustees is fully protected at all times.

Confirmation is required from Boards of Management that school insurances are in accordance with the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy and that all categories of insurance detailed below are in place.

1. Property Damage (Including Consequential Loss cover up to 20%) Cover: "Material Damage All Risks" (including larceny & subsidence).
2. Money Cover: Loss of Money belonging to the School (including financial loss following misuse of any credit card belonging to the School) up to Allianz policy limits.
3. Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity required – €30,000,000 inclusive of Law Costs in respect of any one event.

4. Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity required – €30,000,000 inclusive of Law Costs any one Event.
5. Professional Indemnity: Limit of Indemnity required – €6,500,000 inclusive of Law Costs in any one Period of Insurance.
6. Trustees', Directors' and Officers' Liability/Limit of indemnity: €2,500,000 inclusive of Law costs in any one Period of Insurance.
7. Employment Practices Liability: Limit of Indemnity – €2,500,000 inclusive of Law Costs in any one Period of Insurance.
8. Fidelity Guarantee Limit: €100,000 in any one Period of Insurance.
9. Legal Expenses/Limit of Indemnity – €1,000,000 in any one Period of Insurance.
10. Staff Personal Accident.

Full details of cover and of all applicable terms, conditions and exclusions are contained in the policy document which will be provided by Allianz plc. at your request.

The prompt payment of the premium to ensure continuous cover is a most serious responsibility of the Board of Management.

The Board should ensure that there are procedures within the school for recording every accident. A report form for every incident of injury to persons or of damage to property should be sent without delay to the insurance company and to the Chairperson of the Board.

If the Board of Management is about to initiate any procedures that may eventually call on the Professional Indemnity policy of the Board, the insurance company should be informed immediately as prior approval is required in many instances Local representatives of Allianz plc. are available to answer queries from Chairpersons of Boards of Management.

Insurance of Members of the Boards of Management of Primary Schools

The Allianz insurance policy covers the individual Members of the Board and the Board as a corporate body, and the Boards successors, for any claim made by any individual or a group against the individual members of a Board and the Board as a corporate body. This cover applies providing the Board Members are acting in good faith and within the provisions of;

- The 1998 Education Act;
- The Rules and Procedures for Boards of Management;
- The Rules for National Schools;
- The Directive of the Patron.

The Board and the individual Members of a Board as a corporate body and as individuals are also indemnified for any claims made against them under Section 14 of the *Education Act 1998*.

There have recently been considerable comments in the media regarding the possible exposure of individual Members of Boards of Management to legal actions relating to criminal acts by employees of the School



Board. To allay concerns of existing Members of Boards of Management and prospective new members, we wish to confirm the following:

The Indemnity to Management Section of the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy provides cover in relation to legal liabilities of the Board of Management and individual members of the Board of Management arising from the performance of their duties as a member or as a Board of Management. The indemnity provided is in respect of legal costs and damages incurred in connection with a claim.

Critically the cover provided under the Allianz policy includes legal liability that attaches to the Board of Management, collectively and individually, as a consequence of a criminal act by an employee or other person for whom the Board is currently or historically responsible.

Naturally, there are terms, exceptions and conditions attached to the policy, but it is important to state that there has never been a case where a Board of Management currently insured by Allianz has been left without an indemnity in relation to such claims.

In effect, a Board, or a Member of a Board, who do (does) not consciously set out to commit a criminal act are provided with cover in the dispensation of their duties. It is correct to state that the policy does not afford any protection to the perpetrator of any such criminal act.

If you have any queries or require any further clarification regarding the foregoing, please contact our Education

Team at 01 613 3966, your local Allianz representative, or your Insurance Broker.

Procedures and Record Keeping

The need for schools to give on-going and detailed consideration to the issues of procedures and record keeping has been a feature in relation to the settlement of a number of legal liability claims under the following insurance covers:

- Employer's liability;
- Public liability;
- Professional Indemnity;
- Employment practices liability.

Insurers have successfully defended claims where appropriate records were maintained and procedures were prepared and actively pursued. Unfortunately, insurers have also experienced situations where the absence of such records and procedures contributed adversely to claim settlements, for example:

- Absence of a safety statement (as required by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act)
- Absence or inappropriateness of policies and procedures in relation to issues such as admissions, bullying, discipline, equality, staff appointments etc.
- Absence of written confirmation from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in relation to:
 - Temporary teachers;

- Additional teachers;
- Approval and withdrawal of approval for special needs assistants,
- Employment Contracts.
- Lack of clarity in relation to arrival and dismissal of pupils, after-school activities (games etc), school trips and supervision.

Insurers do appreciate that changes in legislation, largely driven by the necessity to comply with EU directives, and compliance with procedures established by the Department of Education and Skills increase demands on schools. It is essential to bear in mind, however, that compliance with such legislation is not optional – it is a legal requirement. Non-compliance can expose schools to the possibility of the incurrence of fines or penalties. Furthermore, such non-compliance can impact adversely on the settlement of claims.

The adoption and utilisation of sets of appropriate procedures, including record keeping, will result in benefits to schools in a number of ways, such as:

- Assist in ensuring the protection of school assets;
- Consistency of approach to addressing issues and problems
- Improved quality of record keeping;
- Reduction in the number of delays/queries;
- Reduction in costs/expenses;
- Improved level of defence in claim situations.

Appropriate records of all discussions, meetings, agreements etc. should be maintained by Boards of Management. Approvals from the Department of Education and Skills should always be recorded in writing. The implementation of such an approach by Boards of Management will be of considerable benefit in avoiding any subsequent confusion or misunderstanding in relation to what should or should not be done or what was agreed or approved. Furthermore, as we have said earlier, in the event of any claims occurring under insurance policies, the availability of such records can be crucial to the success or otherwise of any defence.

With regard to the issue of insurance in relation to procedures and record keeping, the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy provides cover for the legal liability of the School and the Board of Management in respect of:

- Bodily injury to employees – (Employers Liability Insurance);
- Accidental bodily injury to third parties and accidental damage to third party property (Public Liability Insurance);
- Breach of duty arising from any negligent act, error or omission, breach of warranty, of trust or confidentiality libel or slander committed in good faith – (Professional Indemnity Insurance);
- Claims arising out of wrongful employment practices (Employment Practices Liability Insurance)

– all arising out of or in connection with a school-related activity, which is defined in the policy as:

‘any activity usual to a school which is carried out with the full knowledge and authority of and under the control of the Board of Management/Governors of the School or of any other person specifically authorised by them’.

The policy cover is not dependent on or subject to the implementation of procedures, therefore resulting legal liability attaching to the School and/or the Board of Management is covered, subject as always to the terms, conditions, limitations and exclusions of the policy. However, the existence of appropriate procedures and written records will enhance the possibilities of successfully defending claims, thus reducing the cost of claims, which, in turn, will have a positive impact on premiums. It is therefore in all our interests that Schools should give serious attention to the issues of procedures and record keeping.

Notification of Claims

The Policy Condition (condition 6 claims procedure) in relation to the notification of these types of claims, requires the school to give immediate written notice to the company on:

- receiving notification of a claim; or
- becoming aware of any circumstances which might reasonably be expected to result in a claim irrespective of the views of the insured as to the validity or otherwise of such claim or prospective claim.

As can be seen from the above, the company must be immediately advised not only of actual claims but also of circumstances that may give rise to a claim irrespective of the views of the school.

Failure to notify claims or circumstances in a timely manner:

- can seriously affect the ability of the company to adequately and appropriately investigate and any related circumstances;
- prejudices the establishment of a position by the company in relation to acceptance/settlement/defence of any claim or circumstances.

Costs and Settlements

In addition to the above, the claims condition in the policy also contains the following requirements:

- No admission, repudiation, offer, promise, payment or indemnity shall be given by or on behalf of the insured without the written consent of the company;
- The Company shall be entitled if it so desires to take over and conduct in the name of the insured or any indemnified party the defence or settlement of any claim or to prosecute in the name of the Insured or any indemnified party for its own benefit any claim for indemnity or damages or otherwise. The company shall have full discretion in the conduct of any proceedings and in the settlement of any claim and the Insurer or any indemnified party shall give all such information and assistance as the company may require.



In other words, the School must not enter into a discussion or negotiation with the claimant(s) without the prior written consent of the Company. Furthermore, the Company is entitled to conduct all negotiations in relation to the handling and settlement of any claim.

Additionally, under the legal expenses section of the policy, cover only applies to legal costs and expenses that are reasonably and properly incurred by the insured with the prior approval of the Company.

Going Forward

The Cost of claims has a direct bearing on premiums charged and it is incumbent on all Boards of Management to strive to reduce claims costs into the future.

Strict compliance with policy terms and conditions by all schools will play a significant role in the control of claims costs, which, in turn, will have a positive impact on premiums. In the circumstances, the necessity for schools to ensure that they comply with policy terms and conditions is very much self-evident.

For more information in relation to the notification of claims please refer to Chapter 11 of the Allianz Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in the School on the schools website: www.allianz.ie/schools

Supervision of Pupils outside Official School Opening Hours

Under the legal principle of in loco parentis the duty of care imposed on a school is to take such care of pupils as a careful parent would of his/her children. The school has a duty to supervise pupils at all times during which they are in the charge of the school. If the school allows access to the school premises before the official opening hours then the duty to supervise applies. In the same way, where pupils are on the school premises after hours a similar duty applies.

It is not unusual for parents to leave their children at the school some time before the start of the school day, and likewise collect their children some time after school finishes. While parents are not entitled to arbitrarily attempt to absolve themselves from the responsibility for the safety of their children, such action by parents does not wholly absolve the school of their responsibility to provide supervision.

Unfortunately this is a dilemma that holds little sway with the courts, who will argue that the practice of parents leaving pupils at a school before hours or collecting them after hours is one which is known to schools, and within acceptance of that fact there is an obligation to provide supervision.

Nevertheless schools can alleviate the potential exposure to claims in this regard by issuing a letter/note to all parents at the beginning of term advising them of the times during which the school can accept responsibility for their children. Such a letter/note is effectively in the form of a disclaimer and can prove to be a useful deterrent against claims made against the school.

While it is doubtful if such disclaimers carry the desired protection in law, we do, in general terms, recommend their usage.

As regards the school transport system, schools are not party to this, and the fact that the children are conveyed to or from school by bus does not impose an additional obligation on the school. As we have stated, it is important that parents are made aware that no arrangements exist for the supervision of their children who arrive at the school, whether by school bus or otherwise, before the official opening times. A similar situation arises in respect of children who remain after school hours awaiting collection by the school bus.

Please refer to pages 57 and 58 of the *Allianz Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in School* for a recommended wording in relation to the notification of official school times.

Where a Principal or other member of staff takes it upon themselves to voluntarily provide supervision outside of official school hours, they could be deemed by a court to have created a precedent, and consequently they could be held to be liable if, having established the practice, they fail to do so for some reason or another.

Notwithstanding all of the foregoing, it is important to emphasise that cover under the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy in respect of accidental injury or damage, as defined in the Policy, will, subject to the policy terms, definitions, conditions, limitations and exclusions, operate where the school is held to be legally liable, whether such injury or damage occurs before, during or after official school times.

Risk Management – School Extensions/Construction/Alterations

It is important for all schools to realise that the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy specifically excludes liability arising from or in connection with such activities, and consequently separate insurance cover is required in respect of work of this nature.

In view of the significant increase in exposure presented by such activities, we always recommend that all such work should be carried out by “bona fide” Contractors experienced in the type of work to be carried out and who carry their own separate Public Liability and Employers’ Liability insurances. Taking this approach ensures that claims arising in connection with the work are dealt with under the Contractor’s insurances and do not therefore impact on School premiums.

Confirmation that the Contractor does carry such insurance should be obtained prior to commencement of the work, including the following:

- that cover is provided for the contract
- such insurances are operative and will remain so during the currency of the contract
- the limit of indemnity provided by such insurances is not less than €6,500,000
- such insurances provide an indemnity to the Insured.

Health & Safety

All work of this nature is subject to the requirements of current Health & Safety legislation. While there are implications for schools under the provision of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, for example, – Section 17 which requires a person who commissions or procures construction work to appoint a Competent Person to ensure that the work is carried out safely – the principal duties arise under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 1993 and the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 1995 and 2001.

The Construction Regulations apply to:

- All building, civil engineering or engineering work,
- Maintenance work on buildings or services,
- Conversion, renovation or decoration,
- High pressure cleaning, and all work of a similar nature other than privately commissioned domestic work.

The Regulations impose the following duties on “the person or organisation who commissions the work” – i.e. School Management

- appoint a “competent” person (or Company) to act as Project Supervisor for the design stage known as PSD
- appoint a “competent” person (or Company) to act as Project Supervisor for the construction stage – known as PSC
- keep and maintain a Safety File as defined in the Regulations and where necessary make it available for

the future maintenance, alteration, renovation or other work on the structure. Where a property or structure is disposed of, the safety file must be passed to the new owner.

The duties of the PSD and the PSC are defined in detail in the Regulations. The Regulations do not, unfortunately, define the term “competent”. However, in practice a qualified architect would be “competent” to carry out the duties of the PSD and a “bone fide” contractor experienced in the type of work to be carried out should be “competent” to carry out the duties of the PSC.

It is important to be fully aware however that the onus is on School Management to be satisfied that both the PSD & PSC are “competent”. Additionally, it must be appreciated that compliance with the regulations is not optional – it is a statutory obligation.

Controls

Work of this nature creates physical hazards such as debris, cables/hoses etc over walkways, falling objects, holes in floors and grounds, equipment and use of hazardous materials. The following are examples of measures which should be taken to reduce the potential for losses:

- Require a written contract for all work to be carried out, including but not limited to the nature and timing of the work, areas within which it is contained (fencing), pupil requirements, emergency/evacuation procedures, security and welfare facilities



- Provide a copy of your Safety Statement to the Contractor before s/he commences work on site. This should include controls and rules for contractors, to ensure the protection of health and safety of staff, pupils contractors and others who may be affected when contractors are engaged in the school
- No cutting, welding, and/or any application of heat ("hot work"), without a written hot work permit
- Scaffolding and other access equipment must be erected and maintained in accordance with current Regulations and Codes of Practice
- Smoking is prohibited
- All entrances and access routes must be kept clear at all times and free from obstruction
- Appropriate signage should be erected
- Implementation of agreed procedures in relation to the storage and use of any hazardous materials. Such materials must be stored and used in accordance with manufacturers recommendations
- Review the Contractors plans for protection of the site including, but not limited to, barricades, fencing, signs, overhead protection for walkways. covers for holes, provision of safety equipment and other measures.

Where you are planning to carry out any work of this nature, it is important that you tell your Insurance Company well in advance of the proposed commencement date so that all issues in relation to insuring the risk can be appropriately addressed.

Critical Incidents

In 2003 the National Educational Psychological Service produced a resource pack to help school staff in responding to unexpected and traumatic events. A second edition of this publication issued in 2007. 'Responding to Critical Incidents': 'Guidelines for Schools' and the accompanying 'Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools' is now available on www.cpsma.ie. The advice and information contained in these publications is based on research in the area of critical incidents and is further enriched by the experience of psychologists and schools with experience of this difficult work.

Such incidents include suicide or suspected suicide, death due to violence, accidental death including road traffic accidents and drowning, and death through illness of members of the school community.

The key to managing critical incidents is forward planning. Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools outlines how schools can plan for crises and also considers preventive approaches that schools can adopt in creating a safe and supportive environment. In times of tragedy, young people need support from the adults who know them best. The publication provides practical step-by-step guidelines for teachers and Principals on how to respond when a tragedy occurs. It offers support to schools at a potentially overwhelming time.

Accidents in Schools

If an accident occurs the following procedure may be of assistance:

1. Assess the type of injury.
2. Contact the appropriate medical services for assistance.
3. Make sure a list of the relevant phone numbers is held in the most accessible point for ease of access in case of emergency.
4. Make sure the contact details for staff, parents, guardians are available and easily accessible.
5. Keep a written record of the accident in the relevant report form/s recording the necessary details as outlined on the form/s e.g. Circumstances, activity being undertaken at the time, cause, equipment being used and service record if accident is related to use of equipment, injuries sustained, witnesses, place, time, witnesses and contact details, the injured party – name, address, age, nature of injury, first aid/treatment received and from whom etc, emergency services contacted and involved at the scene, name of person notifying accident time and date etc.
6. Take a photograph of the location/ equipment etc.
7. Notify Insurer.
8. Notify Chairperson and Board of Management.
9. Notify Health and Safety Authority [HSA], if appropriate – e.g. circumstances in which employee's {student's injury related to a work related activity} necessitates

absence from work of more than 3 calendar days (including Saturdays and Sundays) but excluding the day of the accident; circumstances of injury, which does not occur while a person is at work but is related to a work place activity, which requires treatment by a registered medical practitioner. If accident involves equipment remove that from service and preserve for inspection.

10. Consider action to prevent a recurrence.
11. Contact/report to the relevant relative, parent guardian as appropriate and necessary.
12. Keep such records for a period of 10 years.

Accident Report Form

The following particulars of ALL accidents must immediately be reported to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

The Insurance Company issues its own Report Form.

It is useful to have copies of the Form available to the Principal Teacher of the school.

Reporting to Health and Safety Authority (HSA)

Accidents can be reported to the Health and Safety Authority in two ways:

1. by hard copy, i.e. completing the Incident Report Form (IR1) and posting it to the Workplace Contact Unit, Health and Safety Authority, The Metropolitan Building, James Joyce Street, Dublin 1, or

2. by reporting online, via the Health and Safety Authority's website.

The Authority only accepts the pre-printed official IR 1 forms published by the Authority, photocopies are not acceptable.

Copies of the IR1 form are available by telephoning 1890 289 389 or if calling from outside of the Republic of Ireland +353 1 6147000

Sample Accident Report Form	
Query	Reply
Place where accident occurred:	
Date and time of accident:	
State cause of accident [if known]:	
Give detailed account of accident stating as fully as possible the nature and result:	
Did the injured person cease class/work?	
Name and address of person injured:	
Name and address of witness of accident:	
Signature of person in charge at time when accident occurred:	
Signature of Principal Teacher:	
Date	

School Finance

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [Financial Governance](#)
- [Segregation of Duties](#)
- [The Education Act 1998](#)
- [Certification or Audit](#)
- [The Treasure](#)
- [Preparing a Budget](#)
- [Receiving and Recording Grant Receipts](#)
- [Fund-raising](#)
- [Capital Expenditure and Works](#)
- [Banking](#)
- [Use of School Credit/Debit Card](#)
- [Online Banking](#)
- [Maintenance of Lodgement Books](#)
- [Maintenance of Cheque and Online Payments](#)
- [Petty Cash](#)
- [Expenses](#)
- [Commitments, Bank Overdrafts and Other Borrowings](#)
- [Payments to Independent Assessors / Interviewers](#)
- [Relevant Contracts Tax \(RCT\)](#)
- [Value Added Tax \(VAT\)](#)
- [VAT Returns and Annual Return of Trading Details](#)
- [Registration of each school with the Charities Regulatory Authority](#)
- [Schools Procurement](#)

Financial Governance

There is a need to ensure that the financial governance of a primary school is strong and meets the ever changing needs of the education system. The control and management of school finances requires that appropriate procedures are put in place to ensure that all income and expenditure is recorded and accounted for in a clear and concise manner.

The control framework will vary from school to school but these guidelines should act as a template for implementation by the Patron and Boards of Management of primary schools across the country.

The Board must satisfy itself that proper internal controls are in place for all financial transactions.

Segregation of Duties

Segregation of duties is the concept of having more than one person required to complete a task. The separation of sharing by more than one individual in a single task is an internal control intended to prevent fraud and error.

- Within segregation of duties, there are 4 types of functions: authorisation, custody, record keeping and reconciliation. Ideally, no one person should handle more than one type of function.
- Steps should be taken to ensure that at least two people are involved across the four types of functions.
- This can be achieved by dividing a function into separate steps and by assigning each step to a different person.

- As far as possible, there should be adequate segregation of duties to ensure that no one individual has complete control over all aspects of the cash cycle i.e. receipts and payments. This reduces the risk of intentional manipulation or error.

The Education Act 1998

Section 12 of the *Education Act 1998* deals with annual state funding of schools, "The Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister for Finance, shall determine and publish in each school year criteria by which any class or classes of recognised schools or centres for education are to be funded in the following year from monies provided by the Oireachtas and such criteria shall allow for the payment of additional monies to recognised schools having regard to the level of educational disadvantage of students in the schools." (Section 12 (1))

Section 18 (1) of the Act states that "except in the case of a school established or maintained by a vocational education committee, a board shall keep all proper and usual accounts and records of all monies received by it or expenditure of such monies incurred by it and shall ensure that in such year all such accounts are properly audited or certified in accordance with best accounting practice; accounts kept in pursuance of this section shall be made available by the school concerned for inspection by the Minister and by parents of students in the school, in so far as those accounts relate to monies provided in accordance with section 12."

Certification or Audit

Certification is ensuring that accounts are in agreement with underlying records where there is little or no review of the supporting evidence. Due to less work being completed, certification should be cheaper than completing an audit. The result of a certification is an accountant's report which places responsibility for completeness and accuracy of underlying records on the Board of Management.

Alternatively, an audit involves a detailed examination (including a review of supporting documentation) to ascertain if books and records are correct. An audit results in an auditor's report giving his/her opinion on the financial statements.

The Board of Management and the Patron must decide on whether to get accounts audited or certified each year but they are required by the *Education Act 1998* to complete one or the other.

The Treasurer

The Board shall, subject to section 6 (c) of the *GMPS 2015 – 2019*, elect a Treasurer from amongst its members. The Chairperson, Principal or the teacher nominee to the Board shall not be the Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall be fully familiar with the requirements of Section 18 of the Education Act, 1998, and also with the requirements of section's 12 and 21 of the *GMPS 2015 – 2019*.

The key duties of the Treasurer include:

- Keep proper and usual records in respect of all financial transactions.



- Prepare budgets.
- Make lodgements in a timely basis.
- Arrange payments in a timely manner.
- Retain vouchers of expenditure for inspection and audit by the school's accountant and by officials of the Department.
- Ensure payments which are made to employees, with the exception of the reimbursement of vouched and approved expenses, are taxed in line with Revenue Requirements.
- Comply with Revenue requirements – P30, P35, P60, and P45.
- Comply with Revenue requirements – RCT and VAT.
- Comply with Procurement procedures when awarding contracts.
- Present at each meeting an up-to-date statement of the school accounts giving details of income and expenditure since the previous meeting.
- Submit all financial documents to the Board of Management, and on request to the Patron, the Trustees, and to the Department at the end of each financial year.

The treasurer's report presented at each Board meeting should indicate:

- The true bank balance at the end of the preceding calendar month (i.e. bank statement less any outstanding uncashed cheques);
- Payments that have been made since the issuing of the bank statement plus payments that will fall due before the next Board meeting;
- Any income due in the same period.

On the basis of this information, the Board of Management will be in a position to consider the financial situation of the school and to make decisions about items of expenditure that may be considered necessary or desirable.

The Board of Management should refer regularly to the section 21 Finance in the *GMPS 2015 – 2019* [pages 32-35]

A sample Treasurer's Report is included below.

Treasurer's Report for School Year: 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016							
INCOME				EXPENDITURE			
	Budget	Actual	Balance		Budget	Actual	Balance
Specific Income				Specific Expenditure			
DEIS Grant				DEIS Grant			
Capitation Grant				Capitation Grant			
Ancillary Services Grant				Ancillary Services Grant			
Standardised Testing Grant				Standardised Testing Grant			
Special Education				Special Education			
Assistive Technology				Assistive Technology			
Capital Grant (i.e. new building)				Capital Grant (i.e. new building)			
Minor Works Grant				Minor Works Grant			
Language Grant				Language Grant			
Other Grants (specify)				Other Misc. Expenditure			
Other Misc. Income				Administration			
Funded Employment				Education			
Other				Establishment			
				Finance			
				Repairs and maintenance			
				Other			
				Capital Expenditure			
Total Income Receipts	€ –	€ –	€ –	Total Expenditure/Payments	€ –	€ –	€ –
OVERALL ANNUAL SUMMARY				COMMENTARY			
Opening Book Balance		–					
Income							
Specific Income	–						
Total Income for the Year		–					
Expenditure							
Specific Expenditure	–						
Total Expenditure for the Year		–					
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year		–					
Closing Book Balance		–					

Preparing a Budget

A budget is a future plan expressed in monetary terms. Financial transactions can be measured against this annual plan. Some advantages of a budget include:

- Ensures school management have a specific plan.
- Ensures that the operations of the school can be monitored daily, weekly, monthly and yearly.
- Aids decision makers in ensuring the financial well-being of the school. In addition to Section 21 (e) of the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 – 2019*, the following criteria for budgeting procedures apply.
- At the commencement of its financial year the Board shall frame and adopt a budget for the year.
- This budget should include provision for all relevant items of expenditure such as insurance, purchase of classroom requisites, maintenance costs, etc.
- A consistent step by step approach should be agreed by the Board with the Principal (no one method of budget preparation is suitable for all boards).
- This approach should be followed on an annual basis.
- Boards of Management should budget in such a way as to enable them to meet commitments which may be substantial but which arise only periodically.
- Boards' expenditure should not exceed their annual income.
- Ensure all information is to hand when preparing the budget.

- Prepare the budget in the step by step manner ensuring that each aspect of the budget is prepared within and before a certain time.
- Prepare the opening budget position
 - Cash Balances
- Begin with Income and identify all income resources including day to day funding.
- Gather the expenditure budget.
- Budget, where possible, for each month of the school year.
- Overdrafts or other forms of debts or excesses of expenditure over income must be approved by the Patron, in conjunction with Trustees where required.
- This should be avoided except for limited periods, and where the Patron is satisfied that the overdraft or debt can be cleared by the Board in the short term.
- Submit the proposed budget to the Board of Management for approval.
- The Board of Management may form a finance sub-committee to operate under the authority of the Board.

Receiving and Recording Grant Receipts

In addition to Section 21 (b) of the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 – 2019*, the following criteria for Grant receipts apply:

- Details of funding to be issued to schools, incorporating any budgetary changes, are placed on the Department of Education and Skills website every year.
- Any grant receipts from the Department of Education and Skills will be lodged electronically to the school bank account.
- Funding provided for specific purposes, such as for the purchase of ICT equipment or to assist parents with the cost of books, must be used only for the purpose for which it is granted and during the specified period.
- Per capita grants are provided to cover general running costs, as well as caretaking and secretarial services. As per *Circular 40/2009*, these grants may be regarded as a common grant, which the Board of Management may allocate according to its own priorities.
- For control purposes a record of all cash receipts, including grants received, should be maintained in a receipts workbook.
- Ensure to record the date, the source, the amount and the purpose for which the money was provided.
- Balances must be repaid to the Department as required and must not be used for other purposes.

Fund-Raising

Fund-raising is an important income generator for schools but the following guidelines should apply where activities of a fund raising nature are undertaken:



- Parents' Association are entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the association, and to hold a bank account in the name of the Parents Association.
- They shall consult with the Board about any fund-raising for the school or school projects.
- The approval of the Board is needed prior to these funds being raised.
- The expenditure of these funds is by the Board of Management in consultation with the Parents' Association.
- All monies raised or generated for an agreed project for the school should, as soon as is practicable, be lodged to the school account.
- Any funds raised must be used for the purpose(s) for which the money was collected.
- If in exceptional circumstances, it becomes unnecessary for the Board to use all of the funds collected for the purpose specified, the Board will communicate this to the Parents' Association and where appropriate, the local community. In any event the funds must be used for the school.
- To comply with the Education Act, all funds expended by the Parents Council for the benefit of the school should be channelled through the school account.
- If monies are being raised, by pupils of the school, for a particular charity then the prior approval of the Board of Management is needed and sufficient enquiries are to be made of the Charity Regulatory Authority (CRA) by

the Board of Management to ensure that said charity is a registered charity within the State.

Capital Expenditure and Works

Capital expenditure is once off expenditure rather than recurring in nature. The purpose of capital expenditure is to acquire an asset (a new building) or gain an advantage of a lasting nature to the benefit of the school (acquiring new computers).

In addition to Section 21 (a) of the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 – 2019*, the following criteria for Capital Expenditure and Works apply:

- No alteration, extension or replacement of the school building and/or grounds shall be undertaken by the Board unless and until such have been approved in writing by the Patron and Trustees.
- In addition to the approval required under (i) above, capital expenditure for which grant aid is to be sought must not be entered into until prior written sanction to do so has been received from the Department.
- Boards must comply with current building and planning regulations and current public procurement requirements.
- Nothing in this Section shall prevent the Board from carrying out minor works covered by Circular 0062/2013 or any updates thereof ("Grant Scheme for Minor Works to National School Properties"). If in doubt on the interpretation of the terms of that circular, the Board should consult with the Building Unit of the Department.

- The Patron may designate the Chairperson or a member of the Board to act on behalf of the school authority in dealing with the Department in regard to capital expenses. Such designation must be made in writing.

Banking

As an integral part of any selection process, the veracity of references of persons who will handle money and financial records should be verified.

- The number of bank accounts operated should be kept to a minimum, preferably one – a Current Account.
- The school bank account(s) shall be used solely for the purposes of the school's banking requirements.
- All school bank account(s) should form part of the records of the school that are to be certified or audited every year.

Use of School Credit/Debit Card

The Board of Management shall ensure that clear and concise guidelines are in place for any approved users of school credit and/or debit cards. This should include:

- Protocols and procedures for when to use such cards.
- Custody of cards in question.
- Agreed credit limits (max €1,000) and Authorisation of payments.
- Reconciled monthly statements with supporting documentation and records.



A manual record of all payments should continue to be maintained which would include any credit card payments.

As a means of control, credit card statements should be presented with the Treasurer report at each Board of Management meeting.

Online Banking

In addition to Section 12 (c) of the *GMPS 2015–2019*, the following criteria for online banking procedures apply:

- A request should be made of regular payees to furnish their bank details to the Board of Management so payments can be made online. This will include name, bank, IBAN number and BIC number.
- Payments through online banking should be subject to the same rules as a cheque payment and therefore must be approved by two of three nominated signatories as per the bank mandate that has been approved by the Board.
- In line with segregation of duties principles, no one person should prepare and approve the payment.
- The school secretary can access the online banking system to set up and prepare payments only.
- Access to approval of online payments must be password protected which should not be disclosed by or to any other individual.
- Passwords and access rights should be changed immediately where any change takes place in the role of Chairperson, Treasurer or Principal.

- Payment details to be recorded include: date, payee, cheque number and amount.
- Additions and amendments for any payments on the online banking system must be approved by the Principal and two of three nominated signatories.
- Where possible, bills should be paid at the end of each month.
- No one individual should have unlimited signing authority on any school bank account.
- Amounts above a certain limit should require specific Board of Management approval.

Maintenance of Lodgement Books

The Board of Management should establish and maintain an appropriate system of control for the use and maintenance of lodgement books which are supplied by the bank.

A lodgement book should be used for the following purposes:

- Record and lodge all cash and cheque receipts.
- Lodge monies in a timely manner – large sums of money should be lodged immediately and not held on school premises.
- Analyse recorded lodgements on a regular basis.
- Store in a secure location.
- File in date order.

Maintenance of Cheque and Online Payments

The Board of Management should establish and maintain an appropriate system of control for the maintenance of cheque and online payments. This would involve the documentation of cheque and online payments made on a monthly basis.

In addition to Section 12 (c) of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015–2019, the following criteria for payment procedures apply:

- Cheque payments must be authorised by two of three nominated signatories of the Board, one being the Chairperson and the other, the Treasurer in the first instance.
- However, the Chairperson may nominate a Board member to act as signatory in his/her absence. Where possible, two signatories should be from different categories of Board members.
- Pre-signing of cheques should not be permitted in any circumstances.
- No post dated cheques, unsigned cheques or partly completed cheques should be used or stored.
- Cheques should always be made payable to third parties.
- Amounts above a certain limit should require specific Board of Management approval.
- No one individual should have unlimited signing authority on any school bank account.

- Cheque books should be stored in a very secure location with access limited to authorised personnel only.
- When cheques / online payments are presented for signature, they should be accompanied by a cheque / online requisition which details:
 - The amount to be paid
 - The payee of the cheque
 - The details of the expenditure in the form of an invoice
- Cheques should only be issued once:
 - Invoice has been issued, checked and approved.
 - Allowances and deductions have been calculated on wages.
- Both cheque / online signatories should satisfy themselves independently that the payment is legitimate.
- On payment, mark invoice as paid while including cheque number and date of payment.
- File invoice following payment.
- All signed cheques should be dispatched promptly.
- Cancelled cheques should be retained.
- Cheques cancelled after issue – notify the bank. Cheques should be written on a timely basis.
- Cheques should be written in order with only one cheque book in use at any one time.
- Cheque schedule (including those cancelled) should be completed on, at least, a monthly basis.
- Accumulate a Year to Date (YTD) schedule also at the end of each month.

Petty Cash

In addition to Section 12 (c) of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 -2019, the following criteria for the operation of a petty cash account apply

- A petty cash account may be operated.
- All money should be kept in a securely locked safe.
- The amount of money held in petty cash should be kept to a minimum.
- This should be operated by one person.
- Pre-numbered petty cash dockets should be used for every transaction.
- Only small amounts of incidental day to day expenses should be discharged through petty cash. All proper and usual accounts and records should be kept, including requirements to vouch expenses with receipts, where appropriate.
- The Treasurer should approve and reconcile the petty cash account on a monthly basis.
- A detailed report of petty cash should be retained in the school and signed on a regular basis by the Principal.

Expenses

All payments which are made to employees (including Board of Management members), with the exception of the reimbursement of vouched and approved expenses, must be taxed in line with the requirement of the Revenue Commissioners (including PRSI, PAYE or associated levies).

- Payment should never be made in advance of calculations.
- Payment should be made by cheque or Electronic Funds Transfer only.
- Remit P30 details, PAYE/PRIS/USC, promptly in line with schedule agreed with Revenue.
- Submit P35 promptly at the end of the year.
- Supply employee with P60 on an annual basis.

Vouched and approved expenses may be paid tax free and should:

- Merely put the individual in a position to carry out his/her work.
- No more than reimburse the individual the expenses actually incurred by him/her and do not exceed what are known as the Civil Service rates for reimbursement of expenses of travelling and subsistence (Revenue Statement of Practice SP IT/1/04)

Expenses should only be reimbursed where accompanied by an appropriate expenses claim, which contains details of the date, the purpose, for which the expense was incurred and, where appropriate, supporting receipts/vouchers.

All expense payments should be made by crossed cheque or electronic transfer only.



Commitments, Bank Overdrafts and Other Borrowings

Overdrafts or other forms of debts (including leases or other financing arrangements) or excesses of expenditure over income must be approved by the Patron, in conjunction with Trustees where required, and should be avoided except for limited periods, and where the Board is satisfied that the overdraft or debt can be cleared by the Board.

Where cash flow difficulties arise the School should review its spending plans as a matter of urgency with a view to ensuring that the School does not go into an overdraft position with its bank. The Trustees should also be informed.

Payments to Independent Assessors / Interviewers

The following guidance is in regard to payments to assessors by Boards of Management of Schools.

Any Independent Assessor is to be paid two separate amounts:

1. Daily Fee
2. Travel & Subsistence

1. Any independent assessor is to be paid as a self employed individual.

The individual will sign and complete Daily Fee Invoice Form for services provided, which will furnish the following details to the Board of Management:

- Invoice Date
- Full Name and address of the person who supplied the services
- PPS number of the person who supplied the services
- Full Name and address of the School to whom the services were supplied (School should print this on the form)
- Description of the service supplied
- Daily Fee Rate, which should not exceed €127 but may be less.

2. Travel & subsistence is to be paid in line with the rates shown in Revenue Statement of Practice SP IT/1/04

The individual will sign and complete Travel & Subsistence Form for services provided which will furnish the following details to the Board of Management:

- Full Name and address of the person who supplied the services
- Full Name and address of the School to whom the services were supplied (School should print this on the form)
- Kilometres travelled to and from the School/Venue
- Subsistence claim
- Miscellaneous claim
- Total claim.

Relevant Contracts Tax (RCT)

A school Board of Management, in its capacity as a body established by statute and funded wholly or partly from funds provided by the Oireachtas, is designed as a Principal Contractor. This means that a Board of Management is responsible for complying with RCT requirements and VAT returns when making payments to the building contractor with effect from January 1, 2012, therefore all schools must be registered for RCT whether or not a contract is imminent.

- Relevant Contracts Tax (RCT) is a withholding tax that operates in a number of industries including the construction industry. A relevant payment is a payment made under contract for relevant operations. RCT is deducted from payments due to a sub-contractor by the principal contractor.
- Construction operations would include:
 - Construction, alteration, repair, extension, demolition or dismantling of buildings or structures.
- Maintenance only contracts are not included. Contract involving maintenance and repair are included.
- Where a principal contractor makes a 'relevant payment' to a subcontractor then RCT must be operated.

RCT now operates on an electronic system, through the Revenue Online Service (ROS) between the Principal Contractor and the Revenue. All Boards of Management therefore should make arrangements to register for ROS, unless they have engaged a tax advisor/agent/bookkeeper to carry out all RCT functions on their behalf.



Value Added Tax (VAT)

Where a public body, including a Board of Management, receives construction services, other than haulage for hire, it must account for Value Added Tax (VAT) on such services to Revenue. The method of accounting for VAT in such cases is known as “reverse charge”.

- Such public bodies are required to be registered for VAT.
- The process is that the subcontractor should invoice the public body net of VAT.
- The invoice must contain the statement “VAT on this supply to be accounted for by the Principal Contractor”.
- The public body, which receives the services, charges itself the VAT that would otherwise be charged by the subcontractor.
- The public body accounts to Revenue for that VAT.
- The public body should not pay any VAT over to subcontractors.
- The public body should calculate the VAT due on services from the subcontractor and include the VAT in the VAT 3 return.

Bodies who are principal contractors for the purposes of RCT and who receive construction services must be registered for VAT.

VAT Returns and Annual Return of Trading Details

With effect from January 1, 2012, all school Boards of Management are regarded as Principal Contractors and therefore must be registered for RCT and VAT. All schools should remain registered for VAT & RCT at all times.

VAT 3's are a statutory document and must be filed for each period after the due date. Even if a school has no activity in that period, they must return a VAT 3.

Once VAT registered, all schools are required by Regulation 24(1) of the Value-Added Tax regulations 2010 to submit an annual statistical Return of Trading Details (RTD) to the Revenue each year. This is also a statutory document and must be filed.

Registration of each school with the Charities Regulatory Authority

Under the Charities Act 2009 there is a requirement for each Board to have its school registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) and to verify this information once a year. The Department and the CRA work closely to make the registration process as simple and straightforward as possible. A list of Board members (as per Appendix G of The Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015 – 2019) must be provided to the CRA for publication on its register. In that regard it will be a requirement to forward a copy of Appendix G to the CRA.

School Registration Requirements

Presently, the CRA are finalising their IT systems in an effort to pre-populate their database with necessary school information from the Department of Education and Skills (DES). This is due to be completed by mid February 2016.

Primary Schools will be advised by email from the CRA to complete the registration process. This will be achieved through logging onto the CRA website and completing a simple and straight forward verification process. As part of this registration process, primary schools will be requested to identify where there are parent associations in place. The CRA envisage that a separate registration process for these organisations is unlikely – and registration may be achieved through linking these organisations to the related schools by way of a 'Branch' identifier.

Primary Schools will not be required to provide the CRA with financial reports – as these will continue to be the responsibility of DES, but there will be a requirement for an Annual Activity Review. For the year ending 31st August 2015 this Activity Report should be filed with the CRA by 30th June 2016. The Report will be in a standard format and limited to identifying the number of employees and pupils (as input from DES) together with a standard narrative. The appropriate member of the School Board will need to go online and sign off on the information. In completing the annual sign off, confirmation will be required that the School is fully compliant with the DES Governing Manual. The names of the Board of Management will be required as part of the registration process.

Once registered, primary schools will still require a Revenue CHY number to obtain tax exemption on gross interest income. The CRA are currently in discussions with the Revenue in order to identify a simple solution to this. A possible solution being considered is to change existing legislation to allow schools to obtain this exemption by using their Roll Number.

Schools Procurement

Procurement of Goods and Services

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) (www.procurement.ie) is an office within the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform. It has been tasked with centralising public sector procurement arrangements for common goods and services (electricity, ICT consumables, IT equipment, stationery and waste). The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform issued *Circular 0016/2013* which sets out the position with regard to the use of central frameworks and contracts by public bodies. All bodies, including schools that receive more than 50% of their income from public funding come under the remit of this circular.

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform *Circular 16/2013* outlines that schools are reminded that it is Government policy that public bodies, where possible, should make use of all such central arrangements. Some of the benefits of central procurement arrangements including cash savings; administrative savings from reduced duplication of tendering; greater purchasing expertise; improved consistency; enhanced service levels and legal certainty.

Department of Education and Skills *Circular 0056/2015* clarifies the use by schools of central procurement arrangements put in place by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). The Circular makes clear that school management has the discretion to undertake procurement individually, and that it is not mandatory for schools to use central procurement contracts and frameworks. However,

schools are reminded of the importance of achieving value for money in the use of public monies and that central procurement arrangements are targeted at securing best value for money. Schools may still purchase from suppliers outside the frameworks if it can be shown that the product can be sourced more cheaply elsewhere or that an existing contract is in place.

Schools Procurement Unit (SPU)

The Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) is the central support resource for providing guidance to all primary and post-primary schools (excluding ETB schools) on any procurement related issue.

It provides practical advice and help to schools on how to improve their procurement processes and practices on an ongoing basis.

The SPU is available as a school's first point of reference with regard to any procurement related issue it encounters. The SPU will provide advice and guidance to help ensure schools are fully compliant in meeting their obligations. Further information is available at – www.jmb.ie/school-procurement



9 Special Education

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [General Allocation Model](#)
- [Resource Hours](#)
- [Special Needs Assistant](#)
- [Continuum of Support](#)
- [Assistive Technology](#)
- [Proposed New Model for Allocating Teaching Resources for Students with Special Educational Needs](#)
- [Circulars Pertaining to Special Education](#)
- [National Council For Special Education – Links to Relevant Forms](#)

The State's responsibility for special education in Ireland is clarified under legislation, including The *Education Act 1998*, The National Disabilities Authority Act, 1999, The Education Welfare Act, 2000, The Equal Status Act, 2000, The Employment Equality Act and the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 and Disability Act 2005. The *Education Act 1998* requires the Minister of Education to provide funding for each recognised school/centre for education and to provide support services for students including those who have a disability or special educational needs (SEN). The Act requires that schools meet the educational needs of all students, including those with disability or other special educational needs. Specific mention is given in almost all sectors of the Act to the inclusion of pupils with SEN.

The provision of education falls within the remit of schools, supported by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), via the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO). Children with special educational needs are regarded as having either high incidence special educational needs (more frequently occurring special educational needs) or low incidence special educational needs (more specific/more demanding special educational needs).

General Allocation Model

The needs of children with high incidence SEN are met from the resources allocated to the school under the General Allocation Model, ([Circular 0007/2016](#)), and are usually met by the learning support teacher in the school. Since September 2012, the allocation is based on 0.2 of a post

(5 hours) for every mainstream classroom teaching post in mixed or all boys schools and 0.16 of a post (4 hours) for every mainstream classroom teaching post in all girls schools (rounded to the nearest 0.2 of a post to facilitate clustering into full time posts).

A school's GAM/EAL allocation is based on its mainstream classroom posts from the previous school year, i.e. for the 2015/16 school year, the GAM/EAL allocation is based on its mainstream classroom posts for the 2014/15 school year.

The needs of pupils who do not have English as a first language are also addressed under the General Allocation Model. There are some exceptions to this. In areas of high numbers of pupils who do not have English as a first language, additional language support posts are sanctioned. The continued requirement for these additional permanent language support posts is reviewed on a regular basis by the Department, having regard to enrolment trends and the number of pupils requiring language support.

Resource Hours

(Lower Incidence Teaching Hours – L.I.T.H.)

Specific resources are allocated to the school to assist in meeting the needs of pupils with diagnosed low incidence SEN. The categories of low incidence SEN are as follows:

- Physical Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment

- Emotional Disturbance
- Severe Emotional Disturbance
- Moderate General Learning Disability
- Severe / Profound General Learning Disability
- Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Specific Speech and Language Disorder
- Assessed syndrome in conjunction with one of the above low incidence disabilities
- Multiple Disabilities
- Down Syndrome (Commencing 2015/'16 school year)

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is a service of the Department of Education and Skills. Each psychologist is assigned to a group of schools. They offer a range of services aimed at meeting these needs, including assessment. Pupils with low incidence SEN require a diagnosis, by psychologist, psychiatrist or other appropriate professional, in order that their needs can be identified and appropriate supports put in place.

Special Needs Assistant

Additionally, where a child has significant care needs or is deemed to be a danger to himself/herself or others, the school may apply to the NCSE via the SENO for a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) for that pupil. [Circular 0030/2014](#) clarifies and restates the purpose of the SNA scheme, which is to provide schools with additional adult support staff that can assist student with special educational needs, who also



have additional and significant care needs. Such support is provided in order to facilitate their attendance at school and minimise disruption to class or teaching time for the students concerned, or for their peers, and with a view to developing their independent living skills.

As and from October 2015, schools are required to submit a Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) with all applications for SNA support. Section 15 of [Circular 0030/2014](#) sets out the requirement for the plan: "Schools applying for SNA support from the 15/16 school year will be required to submit a Personal Pupil Plan for each pupil outlining the pupil's special care needs and showing how the SNA will be deployed to assist the pupil. The plan should demonstrate how the school intends to actively reduce, and where appropriate, eliminate dependency on SNA support within a reasonable timeframe. The plan should include time-bound targets for the development of independence skills. Only a very small number of pupils with severe special educational needs and very significant care needs will continue to access to SNA support throughout their education" ([Circular 0030/2014](#)).

It is envisaged that the PPP will be developed in conjunction with the [Student Support File](#) which has been developed by NEPS, and schools are encouraged to use the NEPS Continuum of Support framework when planning for care needs of students with special educational needs.

Continuum of Support

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) recognises that all children are unique and special educational needs

can occur on a continuum from mild to severe and from transitory to enduring. Therefore, a graduated approach to identification and programme planning is recommended. This approach has formed the basis for the three-stage approach to assessment and intervention ("The Staged Approach") described in the NEPS Model of Service leaflet and in the Department's Special Education circulars (Circular 24/03 and 02/05). Psychologists in NEPS work to support schools in developing this approach to assessment and intervention. Currently, this staged approach has been expanded and reviewed to incorporate a continuum of support in order to support the extensive diversity of pupils with special educational needs in schools. The continuum of support is outlined in DES publications which were issued to schools in 2007. These booklets include "[Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers](#)", "[Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support Resource Pack for Teachers](#)" and "[Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers](#)". These guidelines present a continuum of assessment and intervention processes which acknowledges the central role of the class teacher supported as appropriate by the school's special education personnel and by agencies external to the school. The term "continuum" has been used to reflect the fact that individual special educational needs may occur anywhere along a continuum. The level of intervention and support provided in school should, therefore, be matched to those needs and their changing nature over time.

The Guidelines have been designed to assist teachers in primary schools to identify needs and to develop and evaluate interventions to meet those needs. The

accompanying Resource Pack is intended to provide practical advice and photocopiable templates for teachers to use or adapt for their own use in supporting pupils in their classroom and school. The Guidelines take account of international practice as well as of best practice in this country. They are intended to complement the [Learning Support Guidelines \(2000\)](#) and to be used in conjunction with the [Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process \(NCSE 2006\)](#).

The term exceptionally able is used to describe students who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students.

These students frequently also require additional support. The NCCA has issued draft guidelines for teacher ('[Exceptionally Able Students Draft Guidelines for Teachers](#)', available on www.ncca.ie) to assist in the assessment, differentiation of education and support of pupils who are exceptionally able or gifted students. The aim of the guidelines is to raise awareness of the needs of exceptionally able students and support management and teachers to:

- audit and review school policy and practice
- differentiate the curriculum
- develop effective strategies
- further develop an inclusive school ethos
- provide models of good practice which support and nurture the development of exceptionally able students.



It should be noted that good practice for exceptionally able students is also good practice for all students and can improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Students who are classified as exceptionally able belong on a continuum of students with specific educational requirements. Many have the skills to adjust to their educational and social environment with relative ease, while others may manifest a range of emotional problems and adjustment issues.

In a school climate that celebrates individual differences, the school ethos will promote and support individual differentiation. The key processes that allow for individual development depend on the flexibility of the school organisation and the careful attention that is given to lesson planning, which systematically builds in appropriate challenges for all students. A system of education that caters for the diversity of students' needs is founded on the belief that students first need enriching opportunities to discover their strengths and interests. Once identified, those strengths and interests can be nurtured and supported and potential can be developed into performance (NCCA, 2007).

Assistive Technology

Specific resources (e.g. computers/laptops, specific furniture and occupational therapy equipment) for pupils with special educational needs are also available. Applications for these resources can be made to the NCSE, via the SENO.

Proposed New Model for Allocating Teaching Resources for Students with Special Educational Needs

Following a review of existing models of Learning Support for Pupils with Special Educational Needs, the NCSE published its report in 2014 [*Delivery for Students with Special Educational Needs – A better and more equitable way*](#).

This report identified that the current model for allocating resource teachers to schools was potentially inequitable, because access to professional assessments was not always readily available to those who could not afford to access these assessments privately.

The proposed new model is currently (2015/2016 school year) being piloted in 47 schools (28 primary and 19 post-primary). This pilot model removes the formal requirement for such assessments, as the allocation of support to schools will be based on the profiled needs of the individual schools rather than on the diagnosed disability of individual children.

- Baseline allocation, which will be covered by 15% of the available posts;
- Complex Needs
- Low Attainment in Literacy
- Low attainment in Numeracy
- Social Disadvantage
- Gender

The pilot will be subject to a review by the Department's Inspectorate, the National Council for Special Education, and the National Educational Psychological Services, in collaboration with the participating schools, to determine its effectiveness in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational need.

Currently the Circulars relevant to Special Education are listed on the following page (p. 125) of this publication.

In planning to meet the special educational needs of pupils, schools should plan in a manner consistent with the size of the school, the learning profile of the pupils with special educational need and the expertise of the school staff. As stated in Circular 24/03, the over-riding principle is that resources should be deployed in individual schools in the manner that best meets the needs of the pupils with special educational needs in that school. Additionally, the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for pupils with special educational needs, involving consultation with parents, teachers, Principal, possible relevant external professionals and, where appropriate, the pupil, is essential in planning for the appropriate education of pupils with special educational needs. Guidelines for developing an IEP are available to download on the NCSE website at www.ncse.ie/publications/policy.asp.

Boards of Management are obliged to recruit and employ fully recognised and probated primary teachers for any vacancies arising for Learning Support/General Allocation Model posts.

In relation to Resource Teacher (RT) (low- incidence) posts, the following teachers can be appointed:

- fully recognised and probated primary teachers; or
- teachers who hold provisional or restricted recognition from the Department of Education and Skills.

Circulars Pertaining to Special Education

The provision of education to pupils with special educational needs and its implementation in schools is directed by circulars issued by the DES and is being constantly updated. Therefore, reference to recent DES circulars is essential.

Additional support is available to school via the Special Education Support Service in terms of advice, training, further education and workshops. www.sess.ie

- [0038/2015 Home Tuition Scheme 2015 /2016 – Special Education Component](#)
- [0007/2016 Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2016/2017 School Year](#)
- [0020/2011 The Assessment of Needs process under the Disability Act 2005](#)
- [0017/2011 Revised Arrangements for the Provision of Teaching Supports to Traveller Students](#)
- [0038/2010 Staffing arrangements and the role of the National Council for Special Education](#)
- [0051/2007 Update on Implementation of EPSEN Act \(2004\) and Disability Act \(2005\)](#)

- [0038/2007 Criteria for Enrolment in Special Classes for Pupils with Specific Speech and Language Disorder in National Schools](#)
- [02/05 Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools](#)
- [Information on staffing, supports and grants to Primary and Post Primary schools on setting up a new ASD class \(including an Early Intervention Class\)](#)
- [An Evaluation of Educational Provision for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders](#)
- [Learning Support Guidelines](#)
- [An Evaluation of Special Classes for Pupils with Specific Speech and Language Disorder](#)

- [Form to be completed by the school where the primary reason for the SNA application relates to behavioural care needs](#)

National Council For Special Education – Links to Relevant Forms

- [Application for LITH Support and/or Access to SNA Support](#)
- [Application Form for School Transport](#)
- [Application Form for Assistive Technology](#)
- [School Summary of Care Needs Currently Supported](#)
- [Confirmation of Leavers Form](#)
- [Student Attendance Confirmation Form](#)
- [Notification of enrolment in Special School/Special Class](#)
- [Application for RTH for Students with Down Syndrome](#)



10 Building

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [Capital Expenditure and Works \(School Governance Manual 2015 – 2019\)](#)
- [Capital Funding](#)
- [Additional School Accommodation Scheme](#)
- [Minor Works Grant](#)
- [Summer Works Scheme](#)
- [Scheme of Capital Grants for Emergency Works](#)
- [Important Information relating to Procurement, Tendering and the Appointment of Consultants and Contractors](#)

Capital Expenditure and Works (School Governance Manual 2015 – 2019)

- i. No alteration, extension or replacement of the school building and/or grounds shall be undertaken by the Board unless and until such have been approved in writing by the Patron and Trustees (in schools where there are Trustees).
- ii. In addition to the approval required under (i) above, capital expenditure for which grant aid is to be sought must not be entered into until prior written sanction to do so has been received from the Department.
- iii. Boards must comply with current building and planning regulations and current public procurement requirements.
- iv. Nothing in this section shall prevent the Board from carrying out minor works in accordance with relevant Department circulars. The current circular is [Circular 0062/2013](#) Grant Scheme for Minor Works to National School Properties. Queries in relation to this circular, should be addressed to the [Building Unit of the Department](#).
- v. The Patron may designate the Chairperson or a member of the Board to act on behalf of the school authority in dealing with the Department in regard to capital expenses. Such designation must be made in writing.

Capital Funding

All applications for capital funding are assessed in the Planning and Building Unit of the Department of Education

and Skills. The assessment process determines the extent and type of need presenting based on the demographics of an area, proposed housing developments, condition of buildings, site capacity and so on, leading ultimately to an appropriate accommodation solution.

As part of this process, a project is assigned a band rating under [published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects](#). These criteria were devised following consultation with the education partners.

There are four band ratings overall, of which band one is the highest and band four the lowest. For example, band one projects include the provision of buildings where none currently exist but there is a high demand for pupil places while a band four project makes provision of desirable but not necessarily urgent or essential facilities. Each band rating has several sub-categories which more specifically describes the type of works needed and the urgency attaching to them.

Additional School Accommodation Scheme

The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that essential classroom accommodation is available to cater for pupils enrolled each year and where the need cannot be met by the school's existing accommodation.

Where the need for additional accommodation is likely to be for a finite period of less than three years, a school may be given approval to rent temporary accommodation for this period. The rental contract is between the school authority and the rental company.

Where the need for additional accommodation is likely to be for a period of more than three years, a school may be given grant aid with the option to purchase a prefabricated structure or to use this grant aid to construct a permanent classroom.

Minor Works Grant

Under the revised scheme (2014/2015), funding was made available to all primary schools with permanent recognition for the school year 2014/2015 on the following basis:

- a. €5,500 basic grant plus €18.50 per mainstream pupil and €74 per special needs pupil on the rolls on the 30th September of the year prior to the issue of the grant. (The €74 rate applies to a special needs pupil attending a special school or attending a special class attached to a mainstream school);
- b. Funding is reviewed on an annual basis, and the grant will only be paid as funding permits. The Minor Works grant will be paid in the 2015/2016 school year. The above rates will apply.

The funds allocated under this scheme must be spent on the physical infrastructure of the school or on items of furniture and equipment for educational use including IT related equipment. Works covered include:

- improvements to school buildings and grounds (Items such as the replacement of windows, roof repairs, re-surfacing of school yard, re-painting and re-decorating, improving insulation standards and improving access for all qualify under this heading);



- improvement or replacement of mechanical and electrical services;
- the purchase of standard furniture and physical education equipment;
- the purchase of floor coverings and window blinds;
- the purchase of IT related equipment (Items such as computers, printers, overhead projectors and photocopiers qualify under this heading).

Schools need not apply to the Department for approval to carry out works or to purchase items covered by the scheme.

Summer Works Scheme

The purpose of the Summer Works Scheme (SWS) is to devolve funding to individual school authorities to undertake small-scale building works which, ideally, can be carried out during the summer months or at other times that avoid disrupting the operation of the school. Under the terms of the scheme, school authorities are empowered to manage these works with guidance from and minimal interaction with the Department.

Funding for small scale projects will be allocated in accordance with the prioritisation criteria attaching to the scheme which, in the normal course, include the ability to have the works carried out during the summer.

The current scheme will apply to both 2016 and 2017. Accordingly, a new call for proposals from schools will not be sought in respect of 2017. Under SWS 2016 and 2017, valid applications from schools that are not reached for

funding reasons from within the funding made available in 2016 will qualify to be assessed for purposes of the funding available in 2017, subject to the overall availability of funding. If this arises, the terms and conditions of the scheme will continue to apply when allocating funding to such projects.

Information about the scheme is contained in [Circular 0055/2015](#).

Scheme of Capital Grants for Emergency Works

The main purpose of the Emergency Works Scheme is to ensure the availability of funding for urgent works to those schools that are most in need of resources, as a result of an emergency situation or on receipt of an enrolment application from a special needs pupil.

An emergency is a situation which poses an immediate risk to health, life, property or the environment, which is sudden, unforeseen and requires immediate action and in the case of a school, if not corrected, would prevent the school or part thereof from opening.

Information about this scheme is contained in [Circular 0018/2011](#).

Important Information relating to Procurement, Tendering and the Appointment of Consultants and Contractors

All grant aided building projects are subject to the following provisions. Please check the School Building and Design section of the Department of Education and Skills website for details.

- [Procedures and Cost Plans](#)
- [Tender Documentation](#)
- [Appointment of Consultants](#)
- [Design Guidance](#)
- [Exemplars and Template Designs](#)
- [Technical Guidance Documents](#).

11 Primary Online Database

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- [The Primary Online Database](#)
- [Links to relevant Documents/Circulars](#)

The Primary Online Database

The Primary Online Database (POD) is an electronic individualised database of primary school pupils developed by the Department of Education and Skills. The database will collect individual information on each pupil, including their PPSN.

It is intended that, ultimately, POD will

- replace the need for schools to complete the National School Annual Census,
- replace the need for schools to maintain the Clárleabhar,
- facilitate inter-school transfers,
- facilitate the transfer of data from primary to post-primary schools,
- identify pupils who do not make the transition from primary to post-primary,
- allow schools to update DES centrally-held, school-level data such as School Name, Address and Telephone Number. This will provide schools with one point to correct or amend contact details which will then be available to be accessed by all areas across the Department.

It is also proposed that, in the long term, POD will also share data with the Department of Social Protection, the HSE and the NCSE, and other bodies, eliminating the need for many of the current data requests to schools from these bodies, for example in relation to vaccination programmes, child benefit claims, application for special educational needs etc.

POD is a live Database, allowing for the updating of information throughout the year.

The POD database is accessible through the ESInet portal. This is the same technology that is used for the Online Claim System (OLCS), the Summer Works scheme and other applications.

The Fair Processing Notice outlines the legal basis for POD and the POD retention policy. This document also outlines the legal basis under which schools can ask parents/guardians for their child's PPSN.

Identifiable information will be retained on POD until the pupil's 19th birthday. Schools are advised that they will no longer have access to identifiable records on POD from that point on and they should be mindful of this when formulating their own record keeping and data protection policies.

A POD helpdesk is available to assist schools with any POD queries. The helpdesk is available Monday to Friday 8:30am-5pm on 01 8892311 and at pod@education.gov.ie

The school roll number should be included on all correspondence.

Links to relevant Documents/Circulars

- [Primary Circular 0025/2015 Primary Online Database](#)
- [Fair Processing Notice September 2015](#)
- [DES Sample data collection form for mainstream schools who wish to use it – Revised September 2015](#)

- [Primary Circular 0050/2015 Primary Online Database \[Special Schools\]](#)
- [Fair Processing notice for Special Schools September 2015](#)
- [DES Sample data collection form for special schools who wish to use it – Revised September 2015](#)
- [Primary Circular 0033/2015 Updating and simplifying the manner in which schools can maintain pupil enrolment and attendance records \(Clárleabhar, Leabhar Rolla and Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil\) following the introduction of the Primary Online Database \[https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0033_2015.pdf\]\(https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0033_2015.pdf\) \(POD\)](#)
- [FAQ on the Primary Online Database, DES](#)
- [Information Note for Parents, DES](#)



12 Appendices and Circulars

This section includes:

- [Admission of Pupils](#)
- [Book Rental Scheme](#)
- [Code of Behaviour](#)
- [Copyright and Photocopying in Schools](#)
- [DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity to Schools](#)
- [Educational Passport](#)
- [Enrolment Policy Review](#)
- [Exemption from the Study of Irish](#)
- [Fixed Term Contracts of Employment for Teachers and Contracts of Indefinite Duration \("CID"\)](#)
- [Health Services for Children](#)
- [Legislation Relevant To Primary Schools](#)
- [Mobile Phones in Primary Schools](#)
- [Motion Picture Licensing](#)
- [Numeracy and Literacy](#)
- [On Line Claims System \[OLCS\]](#)
- [Redeployment Arrangements at Primary Level](#)
- [School Heating](#)
- [Secondment](#)
- [Section 29 – Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998](#)
- [Section 29 – Procedure for Hearing and Determining Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998](#)
- [Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2016/2017 School Year](#)
- [The Teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Catholic Primary schools](#)
- [Time in School](#)
- [Active and Relevant Circulars](#)

Admission of Pupils

Education either at home or school is compulsory for children in Ireland from the ages of six to sixteen or until students have completed three years of second level education. A child may not be allowed to attend or to be enrolled in a National School before the fourth anniversary of his/her birth. (Rule 64.1).

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management of all schools to implement an enrolment policy in accordance with the [Education Act, 1998](#). Any request for enrolment should be dealt with using the school Admission or Enrolment Policy. No child may be refused admission to a National School on account of the social position of his/her parents, nor may any pupils be kept apart from the other pupils on the grounds of social distinction.

A parent/legal guardian may transfer his/her child from one National School to another. Under the Education Welfare Act (EWA) S.19 (3) a school must process and respond to in writing an application to enrol a child within 21 days of the receipt of a completed enrolment form. Under the EWA S. 20 (3) the Principal of the school into which a pupil is enrolling must inform the Principal of the previous school of the enrolment so that the child in question can be validly removed from the register of that school.

Under C.56/2011 S.7.8 "The principal of each primary school must send a copy of the end of year report card (including the information from standardised tests) to the primary or second-level school to which a student transfers."

Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 provides for an appeal by a parent or guardian to the Secretary General of the Department, where a Board of Management of a school, or a person acting on behalf of the Board, refuses to enrol a pupil in a school.

Further information can be obtained from:

[Circular 28/2013](#)

[Circular 56/2011](#)

[Circular 27/2014](#)

Book Rental Scheme

Establishing a school book rental scheme has the potential to make a very significant impact on the price of the annual book bill for parents of primary and post-primary pupils/students. The cost of textbooks needed by a student varies depending on the choice of textbooks used in the school. Some estimates of the current (2015) cost of textbooks at primary level can range from approximately €60 in infant classes to €150 in sixth class.

Primary Schools receive funding grants from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) annually to assist with the purchase of school books for pupils. For the school year 2015/2016 €11 per pupil was allocated for pupils in primary schools with €21 being provided per pupil in DEIS schools.

In October 2014 the Minister for Education and Skills announced that a grant of €100 per pupil (€150 in DEIS schools) would be awarded to schools that did not have a book rental scheme in operation. At the time approximately 80% of primary schools had confirmed to the DES that

they had schemes in operation at some level and so were excluded from this funding.

Under [Circular 30/2015](#) schools that were exempt from this grant were allocated additional funding to assist with their book rental programme for 2015 and 2016.

In 2015 schools received €7 per pupils to assist with the purchase of books for book rental schemes. DEIS schools received €8 per pupil.

In 2016 schools will receive €11 per pupil to assist with Book Rental purchases. DEIS schools will receive €12 per pupil.

Please find links below to DES publications that provide advice and support to schools in the establishment and operation of Book Rental Schemes.

[Guidelines for Developing Textbook Rental Schemes in Schools](#)

[A Guide for Parents Textbook Rental Schemes in Schools](#)

[Circular 30/2015](#)

Code of Behaviour

Under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school code of behaviour is prepared in accordance with the following guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB):

[Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools NEWB 2008](#)



Copyright and Photocopying in Schools

Copyright is the legal term, which describes the rights given to authors/creators of certain categories of work. These rights include the right of the owner of the work to control the use of the work, subject to certain exceptions. The owner has the exclusive right to prohibit or authorise others to copy the work, perform the work, make the work available to the public through broadcasting or recordings, or make an adaptation of the work.

In Ireland, copyright protects original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works, film, sound recordings, broadcasts and the typographical arrangement of published editions, computer software and non-original databases and performances. Protection is automatic – there is no system of registration for copyright protection in Ireland. A copyright notice does not need to be placed on a work before it is protected.

Schools are allowed to make copies of copyright material provided the school purchases a 3 year photocopying licence from the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency (ICLA). Copies can then be made subject to the terms of the licence (see below)

The main terms of this licence are:

- It permits photocopying of single or multiple copies of extracts from literary works solely for educational purposes
- The number of copies permitted is limited to the number of pupils in a class plus two copies for each teacher

- No copy shall exceed one chapter or 5% of the work, whichever is greater
- In the case of a short story or a poem of not more than 10 pages, the whole work may be copied.
- Where it is claimed that the licensee (the school), acting under the permission granted by the licence, has infringed copyright, the *Irish Copyright Licensing Agency* (ICLA) shall indemnify the licensee in respect of all reasonable costs. In the event of a copyright infringement claim being made, licensees should immediately make contact with ICLA (01-6624211, 25 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2 www.icla.ie)

(The full terms of the licence are set out in Statutory Instrument 514/2002-Copyright and Related Rights (Certification of Licensing Scheme for Reprographic Copying by Educational Establishments) (The Irish Copyright Licensing Agency Limited) Order 2002)

DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity to Schools

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) is the action plan for educational inclusion which was launched by the Department of Education and Skills in May 2005. It remains the Department's policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. It is designed to address and prioritise the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second – level education (3 – 18 years).

DEIS provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme (SSP).

DEIS prioritises:

- Strengthening Early Education supports
- Investment in early education provision supporting the most vulnerable can be a powerful intervention yielding life-long educational benefits.
- Improving Literacy and Numeracy standards
- Research has shown that those with low levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy are significantly more likely to experience educational failure and to leave the education system without qualifications. Placing a renewed emphasis on the involvement of parents, family members and the community in children's education.
- Parental, family and community involvement, especially in areas of socio-economic deprivation, does not just benefit the children and the school – it is a crucial
- dimension of life-long learning.
- Enhancing attendance, educational progression, retention and attainment
- There is a clear link between pupils' attendance and their educational attainment.
- Successful progression by pupils from primary to second-level is of particular importance.

- Children and young people at risk of early school leaving can benefit from extra supports, both academic and non-academic (including sporting and cultural activities), made available during and outside of school time.
- Supporting recruitment and retention of principals and teaching staff
- There is a need to ensure that schools serving disadvantaged communities can continue to attract and retain well-qualified personnel to positions of leadership and teaching on an ongoing basis.
- Strengthening planning, target-setting and measurement of progress and outcomes
- Planning co-ordination and processes for monitoring and evaluating progress need to be further developed at every level.
- Strengthening professional development
- Focused professional development supports need to be provided for principals and teaching staff working in schools serving disadvantaged communities.
- Enhancing integration and co-ordination both within the education sector and cross sectorally
- The education system operates in a context of broader social and economic circumstances and must work in partnership with others in the best interests of the children and young people it serves.

The following schemes which existed pre-DEIS are now integrated into the SSP

- *Early Start*
- *Giving Children and Even Break* (incorporating the primary Disadvantaged Areas Scheme and Breaking the Cycle)
- The Support Teacher Project (primary level)
- Aspects of the Early Literacy Initiative, including the Reading Recovery initiative and the Junior Certificate School Programme Literacy Strategy and Demonstration Library Project
- The Home/School/Community Liaison Scheme
- The School Completion Programme
- The Disadvantaged Area Scheme for second-level schools and related projects in second-level schools supporting access to third-level.

836 schools are included in the programme in the 2015/16 school year. These comprise 646 primary schools (330 urban/town schools and 316 rural primary schools) and 190 second level schools.

Supports to DEIS schools

Supports for DEIS Band 1 schools

- There are designated staffing schedules for DEIS Band 1 schools giving a PTR of 20:1 in junior schools, 22:1 in vertical schools (schools with junior and senior classes) and 24:1 in senior schools [Circular 07/2016](#)

- Administrative Principal are appointed on an enrolment of 116 pupils [Circular 07/2016](#)
- DEIS grant paid based on level of disadvantage and enrolment – [DEIS Funding Guidelines](#)
- Access to [Home School Community Liaison services](#)
- Access to [Schools Meals Programme](#)
- Access to range of supports under [School Completion Programme](#)
- Access to literacy/numeracy support such as Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, First Steps, Ready Set Go Maths
- Access to planning supports
- Access to a range of professional development supports
- Additional funding under [School Books Grant Scheme Circular 46/2013](#) (see also [Textbook Rental Schemes in Schools](#))

Supports for DEIS Band 2 schools

- Administrative Principal appointed on an enrolment of 144 pupils [Circular 07/2016](#)
- DEIS grant paid based on level of disadvantage and enrolment – [DEIS Funding Guidelines](#)
- Access to [Home School Community Liaison services](#)
- Access to [Schools Meals Programme](#)
- Access to range of supports under [School Completion Programme](#)



- Access to literacy/numeracy support such as Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, First Steps, Ready Set Go Maths
- Access to planning supports
- Access to a range of professional development supports
- Additional funding under [School Books Grant Scheme](#) (see also [Textbook Rental Schemes in Schools](#))

Supports for DEIS Rural schools

- DEIS grant paid based on level of disadvantage and enrolment – [DEIS Funding Guidelines](#)
- Access to [Schools Meals Programme](#)
- Access to planning supports
- Access to a range of professional development supports
- Additional funding under [School Books Grant Scheme](#) (see also [Textbook Rental Schemes in Schools](#))

In April 2015, an ESRI report commissioned by the Department of Education and Skills was published. Learning from the Evaluation of DEIS, brings together learning from evaluations of DEIS conducted to date by the Educational Research Centre, Drumcondra and the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills. It also reviews other related Irish and international research on educational disadvantage. The report highlights the success of DEIS since it began in 2005 as well providing advice to form future policy direction in relation to educational disadvantage.

Further information is available at from the [Department of Education and Skills – DEIS](#)

Or contact Social Inclusion in the Department of Education and Skills.

Email: Social_inclusion@education.ie

Address: Department of Education and Skills, Social Inclusion Section, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 X659

Phone: (090) 648 3772 / 4096

Educational Passport

Circular 27/2015 deals primarily with the Educational Passport which is now required to assist the transfer of information in relation to pupils transitioning from primary to post-primary schools. From 2014/2015 schools are required to create an educational passport for each child using the NCCA Education Passport materials available on the NCCA website (www.ncca.ie).

The Education Passport materials include:

- The standard 6th Class Report Card Template.
- The “My Profile” sheet for completion by the relevant pupils in 6th Class.
- The “My Child’s Profile” sheet for completion by parents/guardians.

Materials listed at (a) and (b) must be completed and sent to parents/guardians by the end of the second week in June. Parents/guardians have the option to complete (c) and return it to the school. The completed documents (a), (b) and (c) (if returned) should be sent by the primary

school to the relevant second level school on or before the 30th of June.

Note: In relation to transfer of information for pupils moving from one primary school to another refer to [Circular 56/2011](#) Section 7.8.



Enrolment Policy Review

Please note is for guidance only and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.

Questions	Y/N	If Not...
Does the BoM have an Enrolment/ Admissions policy in place?		Section 15(2) (d) Education Act, 1998 provides that a Board shall publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school... If there are a number of Catholic schools within a parish boundary, a common enrolment policy (subject to the approval of the patron) may be drawn up among those Catholic schools to ensure that applicant children get priority in the nearest or local school.

Does the policy document include/refer to...?		
A	Title of the Policy	State [Name of School] 'Enrolment Policy'
B	Introductory Statement	State how the policy was formed and who was involved.
C	Mission Statement	Clearly state the link between this policy, other relevant school policies and the Catholic ethos of the school. An educational establishment does not discriminate if it admits children of one particular religious denomination in preference to others, or if it refuses to admit a child who is not of that denomination, provided any such refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. (Section 7(3)(c) Equal Status Act, 2000)
D	Rationale	State why it is necessary to devise such a policy.
E	Aims	State ideally what the school seeks to achieve by having the policy in place.
F	General Information Section (Section 19(3) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000)	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, address and contact details of school • Denomination/Name of patron • Type of school e.g. co-educational, single sex, ethos, etc. • Number of teachers & range of classes taught • Curriculum offered • Funding e.g. Oireachtas funding and DES grant assistance

Does the policy document include/refer to...?		
G	Application Procedure General Points to note	<p>Clearly state how, when and by what means a parent/guardian should apply for enrolment e.g. application form.</p> <p>a. PPS numbers should not be requested at the time of application unless a specific request for resources is being made to the NCSE30 at that time. Any such general request at enrolment is contrary to current Data Protection legislation.</p> <p>b. Schools may... as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.</p> <p>c. Admission of Junior Infants normally takes place on the first day of the academic year. Any child who has not reached his/her fourth birthday cannot be enrolled at any time.</p> <p>d. The BoM of a school must make a decision (Section 19(3) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000) in respect of an application within 21 days of receipt of such application. Where a school reasonably requires further information, the policy should state that the application will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information, has been received. Schools should therefore clearly state what information and documentation is required.</p> <p>e. The Board may wish to specify that Junior Infants must be four years old by/on a certain date e.g. where the number of applications in any given year exceeds the availability of places. In the case of pupils applying for enrolment in other streams, the BoM should provide for enrolment at any time. Boards should exercise caution when taking applications throughout the year and are reminded of the requirement to give a decision to the applicant parent/guardian within 21 days of the application being made.</p>
H	Decision Making Process	The policy should clearly state that decisions will be given in writing within 21 days of receiving a complete application.

Does the policy document include/refer to...?		
I	Enrolment Criteria	<p>In regard to criteria for enrolment, the priority order in which children will be accepted, in situations where schools may be oversubscribed, should be clearly stated.</p> <p>Suggested Criteria (adapt to suit circumstances):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children from [Name of other school]: This covers schools whose intake comes primarily from an infant, junior or other school • Sisters and/or brothers of pupils currently in the school This will depend on the type of school e.g. single sex schools • Catholic children living within the parish boundary • Catholic children living outside the parish boundary who do not have a Catholic school within their own parish boundary • Other children living within the parish boundary • Other children living outside the parish boundary • Children of current staff, including ancillary staff. <p>In the event that there are more applicants within any category than there are available places, priority will be given to children within the particular category in order of age, starting with the oldest. (Schools should ensure that criteria used do not directly or indirectly discriminate against an individual applicant or any group of applicants. Section 3(2) Equal Status Acts, 2000-2008. See also CPSMA Newsletter/Issue 2 November 2009/Equal Status Acts 2000-2004, Note.; Stokes v Christian Brothers High School Clonmel DEC-S210-056 (subject to appeal).</p>
J	Enrolment of Children with Special Needs	<p>Mainstream Schools (General)</p> <p>As a general principle, enrolment of children with a disability or special educational needs cannot be deferred or postponed until additional resources have been approved or allocated by the DES or SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser). All relevant information and reports should be requested to support the application, thereby enabling the BoM to make a prompt and informed decision. The decision taken should always be in accordance with the agreed enrolment policy.</p>

Does the policy document include/refer to...?		
J	Enrolment of Children with Special Needs (continued)	<p>Mainstream Schools with Special Classes and Units</p> <p>Schools with special classes and units for children with Special Educational Needs [SEN] should provide clear guidance to applicant parents/guardians on how places in these classes are allocated e.g.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Priority will be given to children currently enrolled in mainstream classes in the school with a professional report recommending placement 2. Children currently enrolled in special pre-schools attached to the school will be given priority over external applicants. The status of such pre-schools should be clearly established and stated e.g. private or State sponsored. 3. Other children with special needs who do not fall into either category 1 or 2 above. <p>In categories (1) & (2) these students may already be registered students of the school.</p> <p>As a priority, the policy should detail the range of disabilities and services catered for in the special classes and/or units. In this regard, the school needs to be very clear to whom, by whom and to what level, non-educational services can be provided. In certain cases the DES is prescriptive as to entry criteria for some classes and units and these should be stated accordingly. Special Schools Special schools should state clearly the categories of SEN they cater for and the specific requirements for entry to the school i.e. the need for an applicant child to have a professional report confirming the diagnosed SEN and recommending placement in a special school.</p> <p>It should be noted that enrolment practices and resource allocations in special schools are currently under review by the DES/NCSE.</p>

Does the policy document include/refer to...?		
J	Enrolment of Children with Special Needs (continued)	<p>Special Schools</p> <p>Special schools should state clearly the categories of SEN (Special Educational Needs) they cater for and the specific requirements for entry to the school i.e. the need for an applicant child to have a professional report confirming the diagnosed SEN and recommending placement in a special school (DES Circular 38/2010). It should be noted that enrolment practices and resource allocations in special schools are currently under review by the DES/NCSE (National Council for Special Education).</p>
K	Refusal to enrol on grounds of 'Exceptional Circumstances'	<p>A BoM can only refuse to enrol in compliance with its agreed policy. The BoM can reserve in its enrolment policy the right to refuse enrolment in exceptional circumstances e.g. The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education or (i) In the opinion of the BoM, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property. Boards should only seek to rely on this clause in rare and exceptional circumstances. Schools should be aware of the right of a parent/guardian to appeal the decision of the BoM.</p>
L	Right of Appeal	<p>Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended by section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007) provides for a right of appeal against a decision to refuse enrolment. The policy should state how, when and by whom parents/guardians are informed of their right to appeal a decision of the BoM in relation to a refusal to enrol. It should also state who has responsibility for preparing a response for the Appeals Committee if and when an appeal is initiated. Following a decision of the Supreme Court, Boards should note that, in an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, an Appeals Committee can substitute its decision for that of the BoM and may make such recommendations to the Secretary General of the DES as it considers appropriate.</p>

Does the policy document include/refer to...?		
M	Pupil Transfer	<p>Pupils may transfer to the school at any time subject to the school's enrolment policy and available space. BoM should be aware that the enrolment, which determines the teaching allocation of a school each year, is determined by the enrolment as of 30th September in the previous school year. Schools should note that the legal obligation to share information in relation to attendance and educational progress has effect only when the child has been put on the register of the second school and not before. Any sharing of information prior to registration could be in breach of Data Protection legislation.</p>
N	Code of Behaviour	<p>A school should append to its enrolment policy, a copy of its Code of Behaviour and any other policy referred to in its enrolment policy. Section 15(2) (d) of the Education Act, 1998 provides that the enrolment policy should outline the policy in relation to suspension and expulsion in accordance with NEWB Guidelines.</p>
O	Review	<p>The policy document should note when, how and by whom the policy will be monitored and reviewed.</p>
P	Approval of Patron	<p>Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998 requires a Board of Management to publish, in such manner as the Board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with.</p>
Q	Ratification	<p>On receipt of approval from the patron, the revised policy should be approved at a meeting of the BoM, signed by the Chairperson, dated and retained with the minutes of the particular meeting.</p>

Does the policy document include/refer to...?		
R	Communication/ Circulation of Policy	Revised copies/updates should be made available on-line and/or issued in hard copy on request to parents/guardians. New applicants to the school should be given a hard copy of the enrolment policy. Note: In 2013 the Minister for Education published a draft General Scheme for an Education (Admission to Schools) Bill. As well as draft regulations for discussion ahead of enacting legislation. The proposed legislation consists of a framework to regulate school Admission Policies in all primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. Attached is a link to the Draft General Scheme for an Education (Admissions to School) Bill 2013 as well as the CPSMA submission on the bill.

Note:

In 2013 the Minister for Education published a draft General Scheme for an Education (Admission to Schools) Bill. As well as draft regulations for discussion ahead of enacting legislation.

The proposed legislation consists of a framework to regulate school Admission Policies in all primary and post-primary schools in Ireland.

Attached is a link to the Draft General Scheme for an Education (Admissions to School) Bill 2013 as well as the CPSMA submission on the bill.

Exemption from the Study of Irish

Irish is a compulsory subject in schools recognised by the Department of Education and Skills. However, there are certain limited circumstances whereby an exemption may be granted. The authority to grant an exemption has been delegated to school management.

A written application for an exemption is made by the parent or guardian to the school principal on behalf of their child. The application should state the reasons why the exemption is being sought. A child will only be considered for an exemption where his/her educational circumstances come within the provisions of the Circular 12/96 in the case of a primary school going child.

An exemption may be sought in the following circumstances:

- Children whose primary education up to 11 years of age was received in Northern Ireland or outside Ireland.
- Children who were enrolled in a recognised primary school and who are now re-enrolling again after having been abroad for at least 3 years. The child must also be at least 11 years of age on re-enrolment.
- Children from abroad who have no understanding of English, when enrolled, would be required to study one language, either English or Irish.
- Children of diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.
- Children, in whose case the Minister is satisfied, that they are resident in this country as political refugees.
- Children assessed as having either a specific or general learning disability who meet the Department's specific criteria.
- Children with serious sensory disability.

Both age thresholds and time periods where mentioned are strictly adhered to.

It is school management who make the decision to grant an exemption, normally the school principal. Where a school has made the decision to grant an exemption a Certificate of Exemption will be given by the school to the parents or guardian. The certificate will

state the grounds on which the exemption is granted and will be signed by the school principal/manager. Parents are advised to retain the certificate for future reference.

Once granted an exemption lasts for the duration of the child's attendance at primary and post-primary schools recognised by the Department of Education and Skills. Where a child transfers between recognised schools or moves from primary to post-primary a copy of the Certificate of Exemption and any supporting documentation should be provided to the new school. The exemption will continue to apply in the new recognised school once supported by evidence that it been granted previously.

Please note that since 2009 schools no longer have to submit exemption forms to the DES. However, they should be kept on file in the school and be made available on request to the DES Inspectorate. The number of children with Irish Exemptions enrolled in a school is included on the annual school returns.

For revisions to Circular and Exemption Certificate please see Circular 12/96

Fixed Term Contracts of Employment for Teachers and Contracts of Indefinite Duration ("CID")

The original arrangements and procedures set out in Department circulars were based on compliance with the requirements of the Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act 2003. Under that legislation where a fixed-term employee is employed by his/her employer on two or

more continuous fixed-term contracts and the aggregate duration of an employee's continuous fixed-term contracts exceeds four years, that employee shall be deemed to be employed under a contract of indefinite duration (CID) (and no longer a fixed term contract) unless there were objective grounds set out in the previous contract. While the legal provision remains unchanged, the terms and conditions of teachers have been improved through the Haddington Road Agreement (HRA).

Circular 0023/2015 implements the recommendations of the expert group on fixed-term and part-time employment in primary and second level schools. The report was presented by Peter Ward SC and is referred to as the Ward Report. [Circular 0064/2013](#) reduced the qualification period "for entitlement to assessment for contract of indefinite duration" from a period of in excess of four years' continuous service with the same employer to a period in excess of three years' continuous service. However, apart from reducing the qualification period, [Circular 0064/2013](#) left the terms of [Circular 0082/2007](#) otherwise intact.

Circular 0082/2007 contained two exclusions in paragraph 2.2.1 where a CID would not be awarded to a teacher who had four or more years' successive teaching service: firstly, where a post would not be viable within a reasonable period, and secondly, where the person was covering for a post holder who was on an approved scheme of leave of absence.

Circular 23/2015

[Circular 23/2015](#) has further reduced the qualification period from a period in excess of three years' continuous

employment with the same employer to in excess of two years. The post to be filled must be viable for a "reasonable period", which is stated as being "considered to be at least a full school year". An important change has been introduced whereby teachers who are covering for teachers who are absent on a career break or on secondment may now be entitled to a CID.

Boards should note that ALL first fixed term contracts must be terminated at the end of the school year and must be re-advertised and a new recruitment process undertaken for the filling of the vacancy for the second year. Accordingly a second year fixed term contract CANNOT issue to a teacher until the position has been advertised and interviews held.

Boards of Management should ensure that the sanction of the Department *must first be obtained* before a CID can be awarded.

The Department may audit the practices within schools in relation to the implementation of this circular.

Members attention is drawn to the following recently issued circulars:

1. Revised and updated Seniority [Circular 15/2016](#)
2. [Circular 0007/2016](#)
3. [FAQ document on Redeployment Arrangements for Surplus Permanent/CID Holding Teachers](#) which issued with Circular 0007/2016

CPSMA will keep members updated in relation to developments on this issue and members should contact this office if they have any queries in this regard.



Health Services for Children

The HSE are obliged to provide dental, aural and optical services to pre-school children and school children attending state primary schools.

The *School Health Screening Programme* is conducted by public health nurses and area medical officers who are employed by the HSE Areas. These screenings are carried out on the school premises and the school principal is told of the date of the screenings in advance so that parents can be notified. Written permission from parents must be sought for the health screening to be carried out and parents are entitled to be present if they wish. Children's hearing and vision are examined and where children are discovered to have hearing or optical problems, they are referred to the appropriate consultant for treatment. Problems that are identified at these screens are treated free of charge if the child attends as a public patient at an out-patient hospital department. Any subsequent treatment (whether out-patient or in-patient) arising from this initial referral is free of charge as a public patient.

Vaccinations under the *Childhood Immunisation Programme* are provided free of charge to all children of school going age. These may be administered in schools by the HSE. Parental consent is required for the administration of vaccinations to children and young people up to the age of 16. Where vaccinations are being administered in schools, parents will receive forms requesting their consent. They will also usually be advised of the date of the vaccinations and may have the option of being present with the child if they wish.

HSE Dental Clinics also provide services for children of school-going age. This service is accessed through scheduled screening appointments based on the primary school.

For further information see the [HSE School Programme](#) and [Circular 44/2015](#) regarding the HSE Primary School Vaccination Programme 2015/2016.

Legislation Relevant To Primary Schools

- Child Care Act 1991
- Education Act 1998
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Children Act 2001
- Disability Act 2005
- Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004
- Employment Act 1994 and 2001
- Equality Act 2004
- Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
- Data Protection Act 1988 and 2003
- Protection of Employees (Part-time Work) Act 2001
- Protection of Employees (Fixed-term Work) Act 2001
- Teaching Council Amendment Act 2006
- Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007
- Education (Amendment) Act 2012

- National Vetting Bureau Act 2012
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.
- Child and Family Agency Act 2013
- Protected Disclosures Act 2014
- Children (Amendment) Act 2015
- Teaching Council (Amendment) Act 2015
- Workplace Relations Act 2015
- Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015
- Children First Act 2015

All the above legislation can be found at www.irishstatutebook.ie

Mobile Phones in Primary Schools

The question of prohibiting mobile phones is a matter for the Board of Management of individual schools.

Schools have considerable autonomy in their day-to-day operation and decision making to prohibit any items of concern from the pupils attending the school. (Department of Education and Skills)

It is recognised that mobile phones can be intrusive and distracting in all situations and particularly in schools. In addition to the inconvenience, the debate still goes on about the possible harmful effects of the frequent use of mobile phones. Children could be particularly vulnerable in this regard.



Boards of Management should ensure that there is a policy in the school forbidding the use of mobile phones in the school. A notice to that effect should be displayed in the school.

The use of mobile phones by staff for essential calls should be kept to the minimum and should be taken /made if possible in an open area or in an area where pupils are not present. Camera phones should not be allowed in schools.

Questions the school may need to address when forming a policy:

- Are there pupils who need to have mobile phones in school e.g. pupils with special educational needs/pupils with specific needs at a particular time?
- What is the school's policy in relation to such requests?
- Has the school's policy been communicated to the school community?
- What happens if pupils bring mobile phones to school, despite being told not to? Are phones confiscated and, if so, how are they stored, returned to owners...? Have parents been made aware of the school's policy?
- Are there special circumstances where the usage is permitted e.g. school trips/sports events when pupils have to participate away from the school / home locality / other.... Out of or after school events?
- Mobile phones and bullying – is this covered in the school's anti bullying policy?
- Are there specific issues in relation to the use of camera phones?

- What is the provision for staff to use mobile phones? When? Why?
- Are there particular circumstances where the use of personal mobile phones by staff is essential e.g. on school tours/trips etc? Who pays for such expenses?

Motion Picture Licensing

When a motion picture (including videos, dvds, downloads from the internet etc.) is shown in a school a motion picture licence may be required. For example if the school shows motion pictures for entertainment purposes it will be necessary to obtain a public performance licence from the Motion Picture Licensing Company (www.mplc.ie) who operate a licensing scheme certified under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000.

If a school is simply showing educational and/or instructional material then educational establishments are exempt and no licence is required.

Numeracy and Literacy

[Circular 56/2011](#) draws attention to the publication of *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011–2020*. The circular sets out a number of adjustments and provisions to be made in schools to improve literacy and Numeracy.

These required provisions are:

- Increasing the time spent on literacy to 6.5 hours per week for infant classes and 8.5 hours per week for students with a full day. (an increase of 1 hour a week)
- Increasing the time spent on mathematics to 3 hours and 25 minutes per week for infant classes and to 4 hours and 10 minutes per week for students with a full day. (An increase of 70 minutes)
- Reviewing the assessment policy of your school to ensure that it is in line with the NCCA publication, *Assessment in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools* (2007) and the requirement of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.
- Implementing standardised testing in the period May/ June for 2nd, 4th and 6th class students, from 2012 onwards.
- Maintaining results of standardised tests in the school and making these available to Department Officials for inspection.
- Reporting to parents on the progress of their child using the NCCA templates and including the results of any standardised tests undertaken. (The NCCA has

developed information leaflets for parents explaining standardised test results, these should be enclosed with reports)

- Providing copies of pupil's report card information and standardised test results to the Principals of schools to which the pupils transfer. (At the end of 6th class or earlier – see Educational Passport). This information is only to be transferred to the new school following confirmation of the pupil's enrolment.
- Using the results of standardised test in reading and mathematics and other assessment information to inform the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan (See SSE).
- Aggregated results of standardised tests conducted must be reported to the board on management and the Department of Education and Skills annually.
- Schools must co-operate with requests from the Minister for Education and Skills to participate in national and international assessments of pupil's achievement.

These time increases are to be achieved by a combination of the strategies below:

- integrating literacy and numeracy skills with other curriculum areas
- using some or all of discretionary time for literacy and numeracy activities
- re-allocating time spent on other subjects to literacy and numeracy

- prioritising most valuable curriculum objectives and delaying the introduction of
- elements of some subjects (for example, by delaying the introduction of strands and
- strand units from the history and geography curriculum for the infant classes and first and second classes to later in the primary cycle).

On Line Claims System [OLCS]

Operational guidelines for Boards of Management and Staff designated to operate the On Line Claims System can be found in the following circular: [Primary Circular 0024/2013](#).

Security Guidelines are also referenced in the following document: [On Line Claims System Security Guidelines for Boards of Management and Staff Designated to operate the On Line Claims System in Schools](#).

Redeployment Arrangements at Primary Level

1. Redeployment Arrangements at Primary Level for Surplus Permanent and CID Holding Teachers:
 - [Circular 0007/2016](#) - Staffing arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2016/2017 School year
 - [FAQ Document](#) - Redeployment Arrangements at Primary Level for Surplus Permanent and CID Holding Teachers January 2016
2. Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2016/2017 school year:

- [Circular 0058/2015](#) - Panel access for fixed term/ temporary (this includes substitute) and part time teachers to the Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2016/17 school year
- [FAQ's to Circular 0058/2015](#) - Redeployment arrangements for fixed term/temporary (this includes substitute) and part time teachers through the Supplementary Panel.

School Heating

Department of Education Circular 21/79 sets out the minimum level of heating in national schools and the procedure to be followed in the event of the heat not reaching that minimum level:

Circular 21/79

Definition of Inadequate Heating:

1. Following discussions which officials of the Department have had with representatives of the management authorities and of teachers, the Minister for Education has decided to introduce procedures, as set out here-under, to be followed in connection with the heating of national schools and to meet circumstances in which the heating of a school building falls below an acceptable minimum.
2. These procedures have been drawn up with the health and comfort of pupils and teachers in mind, but the educational interests of the children must at all times be considered. The Minister would expect that there would



be a reasonable degree of flexibility in the application of the procedures in individual instances; for example, where heating fell marginally below the minimum standard required, resort to the action set out in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 might not be fully warranted.

3. The acceptable minimum level of heating in classrooms is 16 degrees C. Each management authority of a school equipped with a heating system should ensure that it has a service contract which provides for a servicing and maintenance of the system twice yearly. When a breakdown occurs in a heating system, the management authority should put arrangements in hand for its immediate repair.
4. When it is apparent that the existing system of heating in a school is not capable of maintaining the acceptable minimum level in classrooms, the management authority should take steps forthwith to remedy the situation by providing additional temporary heating facilities, until arrangements are completed for the provision of adequate heating on a permanent basis. Grants will be available from the Department towards the cost of improving or supplementing deficient heating systems, subject to certain conditions.
5. The Principal Teacher of the school should bring to the notice of the Chairperson of the Board of Management any problem, dissatisfaction or complaint which arises in relation to the heating of the school.
6. When the temperature in the classrooms has not reached 16 degrees C, within one hour of the opening time of the school and unless there are positive indica-

tions that this level of heating will be attained very soon, the Principal Teacher should contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management or, in her/his absence, a duly authorised member of the Board with a view to authorising the closing of the school and arranging for the pupils to be sent home, provided this can be done without risk to the children. Should the Chairperson of the Board of Management or a duly authorised member of the Board not be available, the Principal Teacher of the school may herself/himself take the decision to close the school. Where it is not possible, or reasonably safe, to send pupils home, teachers continue to have a legal obligation to supervise pupils for the remainder of the school day. Teachers should not, however, be expected to carry out their normal teaching programme in these circumstances. Unless it can be established that the minimum acceptable heating level will be provided on the following school day, pupils should be directed not to return to school until further notice. The school transport officer should be advised of school closings by the Principal Teacher of the school.

7. Where the heating in any classroom has not reached the acceptable minimum level within one hour of the opening time of the school, and unless there are indications that this level of heating will be attained very soon, the class teacher shall not be expected nor required to teach in that room. Unless the Principal Teacher can provide an acceptable adequately heated alternative area, she/he shall deal with the problem as set out in paragraph 7. The teacher affected shall remain at school but shall suffer no loss of salary and shall not be penalised in any

way because of her/his non-performance of class teaching in such circumstances.

8. Where a Principal Teacher fails to carry out these arrangements, a member of the teaching staff shall have the right to make a formal request to the Principal Teacher that the agreed procedures be put into operation. If the Principal Teacher fails to carry out the procedures, the teacher shall be entitled to report the matter to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. If necessary, the teacher may report the matter to the representative of her/his professional organisation.
9. The provisions of the Circular letter should be brought to the attention of the parents as soon as possible.

When a school is closed because of inadequate heating, such a closure should be dealt with in line with [Circular 16/2014](#), section 3 and Appendix B in relation to unforeseen closures.

Secondment

Secondment provides a process for an external organisation to meet a short-term specialised human resource requirement, where that need cannot be effectively met through the normal recruitment process.

The scheme is designed to facilitate the temporary release of a permanent teacher from his/her teaching post. The seconded teacher will be paid his/her salary from the Department of Education and Skills for the duration of the secondment arrangement.

The work being carried out by the teacher in the seconding body must be of clear benefit to the educational system and in particular to primary or second level education.

[Circular 0011/2002](#) governs primary secondments.

Section 29 – Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998

1. Introduction

Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 gives parents (and students who have reached the age of 18) the right to appeal certain decisions made by a school board of management, or a person acting on behalf of a board, to the Secretary General of this Department.

2. Decisions which may be Appealed

Currently, Section 29 of the Education Act provides that the following decisions may be appealed to the Secretary General:

- i. Permanent exclusion from a school;
- ii. Suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year; or
- iii. Refusal to enrol.

It should be noted that the procedures have been designed to deal specifically with the three issues identified at (i) to (iii) above. The procedures are not designed for and cannot be invoked to deal with matters that do not come within these three categories.

Furthermore an appeal to the Secretary General under the Section 29 procedures cannot be made, and will not be accepted, until all procedures local level have been exhausted. In effect, the matter that is the subject of the appeal will have had to have been referred to the Board of Management of the school and the Board will have had to issue its decision in the matter.

3. Timeframe for making Appeals

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe when informing them of any of the above categories of decisions.

4. Procedures to be followed

The detailed procedures that apply to all appeals to the Secretary General under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 are outlined in the appendix to this Circular. In brief, there are three layers to these procedures:

- a. Both parties will be asked in the first instance to see if an accommodation can be reached at local level;
- b. Should that fail, and where the Appeals Committee considers that it may be possible to facilitate agreement between the appellant and school, a facilitator will be appointed to contact the parties at the earliest opportunity;

- c. Finally, an appeal may be referred for hearing by an Appeals Committee established by the Minister for Education and Science.

5. Queries

Any other queries relating to the Appeals Procedure outlined in this circular should be directed to Post Primary Administration, Department of Education and Science, Tullamore, Co. Offaly (Tel. (057) 93 24377. Finally all references in the attached Appendix to the Appeals Administration Unit should be regarded as a reference to Primary Administration Section 2 until further notice.

This circular together with the Irish version is available on the Department of Education and Science website at www.education.ie

The Section 29 Appeals Application Form is also available on Department website at <http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Services/Appeal-against-Permanent-Exclusion-Suspension-or-Refusal-to-Enrol/Appeal-against-Permanent-Exclusion-Suspension-or-Refusal-to-Enrol.html>

Completed appeals forms should be sent to:

Appeals Administration Unit
c/o Department of Education and Science
Cornamaddy, Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Section 29 – Procedure for Hearing and Determining Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998

Introduction

Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, gives parents (and students who have reached the age of 18) the right to appeal certain decisions made by a school's board of management, or a person acting on behalf of the board of management, to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

The Act provides that a decision of a board of management to permanently exclude, suspend or refuse to enrol a student may be appealed on commencement of Section 29. The class of decisions which may be appealed may be extended by the Minister, following consultation with the partners. While consultation on this aspect will be commenced as soon as possible, these procedures are now being introduced in order to provide, in this initial stage, for appeals of permanent exclusions, suspensions and refusals to enrol. The procedures will apply only to appeals of decisions taken by a board of management on or after the date of implementation of the procedures.

The legislation provides that the Minister for Education and Science will establish one or more appeals committees, for the purpose of hearing and determining appeals, and that such committees will act in accordance with such procedures as may be determined from time to time by the Minister, following consultation with the partners in education.

Having regard to the desirability of resolving grievances within the school where possible, the parties to an appeal under section 29, i.e. the appellant and the school's board of management, will be asked to consider the matter in the first instance at local level to see if an accommodation can be reached. As a general rule, appeals will only be considered by an appeals committee under section 29 where the parties are unable to resolve the issue at local level.

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 provides that the National Educational Welfare Board will also be able to appeal certain categories of decisions, and may also make submissions to appeals hearings. The Act has not yet been commenced. Notwithstanding this, provisions have been made in the following procedures for the role of the Board, and such provisions will apply once the relevant sections of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 have been commenced.

Making of an appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science

1. An appeal may be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in respect of a decision by a board of management, as defined in the Education Act, 1998, or by a person acting on behalf of the board of management, to:
 - a. permanently exclude a student from the school
 - b. suspend a student from the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year, or
 - c. refuse to enrol a student in the school.
2. An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student, where he/she is aged 18 years or over, or by the National Educational Welfare Board when established in respect of a decision under paragraph 1 (a) or 1 (c).
3. An appeal will generally not be admitted unless it is made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the board of management under paragraph 1 (a), (b) or (c) was notified to the parent or student concerned. However, a longer period for making appeals may be allowed as an exception where the Appeals Administration Unit is satisfied that circumstances did not permit the making of an appeal within the 42 day limit.
4. In the case of a school which is established or maintained by a vocational education committee, the appeal against the decision of the board of management of the school shall be made, in the first instance, to the vocational education committee.
5. Appeals should be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeals Application Form [specimen copy enclosed] and addressed, by signed letter or fax, to the Appeals Administration Unit. The appellant should at the same time notify the school of the appeal or, alternatively, send a copy of the completed Application Form to the school. Where fax is used, the appellant should also send a signed copy by post. Appeals Application Forms may be obtained from the school or from the Appeals Administration Unit.



6. The Appeals Application Form should be completed in full, and should specify:
 - a. the appellant/ student's full name, address and, where relevant, telephone number
 - b. the decision being appealed
 - c. the grounds on which the decision is being appealed
 - d. the full name and address of the school concerned
 - e. the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision
 - f. the outcome of any relevant appeal proceedings at school level.
7. If clarification is required by the Appeals Administration Unit before determining whether to admit an appeal, such clarification will be sought immediately. Such clarification may include verifying with the board of management details regarding any local procedures that may have been used.
8. Prior to the processing and consideration of an appeal under these procedures, the parties to the appeal will be asked, as a general rule, to consider the matter in the first instance at local level within the school to see if an accommodation can be reached. Where the 30 day period referred to in paragraph 10 has already commenced, the parties to the appeal will be given up to one week in which to determine whether an accommodation at local level can be reached. In exceptional circumstances a longer period may be allowed.

Processing of an appeal

9. An appeal may only be considered where it meets the conditions set down in paragraphs 1 to 5 of these procedures and when all of the requisite information, as outlined in paragraph 6 above, has been provided.
10. Section 29 (4) provides that appeals must be concluded within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of the appeal by the Secretary General, with the possibility of extending this period by 14 days. The date of receipt for this purpose shall be deemed to be the date on which the completed Appeals Application Form containing all the required information has been received by the Appeals Administration Unit.
11. Once the completed Application Form containing all required information has been received, a letter of acknowledgement will issue to the appellant forthwith. The letter may also ask the appellant to submit any additional documentation relevant to the appeal without delay. Such documentation could include school reports, documentation relating to any local procedures used, psychological or medical reports.
12. A letter will also issue simultaneously to the board of management, informing it of the appeal and the grounds on which it has been lodged, and the board of management will be asked to submit as soon as possible any information or documentation which it considers may be relevant to the appeal to the Appeals Administration Unit, including, where appropriate, a statement outlining the reasons for the decision of the board of management. Information submitted by the

board of management may also include relevant school records, documentation relating to any local procedures used, or such psychological or medical reports as may be held by the school in respect of the pupil concerned.

13. All information and documentation provided by the appellant and by the board of management to assist the appeal will be treated in strict confidence and, save as otherwise provided by law, the Appeals Administration Unit will not disclose such information or documentation to a person who is not party to the appeal without the consent of the appellant or board of management as the case may be.
14. Where an appeal is deemed to be inadmissible under these procedures, a letter to that effect will issue to the appellant forthwith, and copied to the school, stating clearly the grounds on which the appeal is not being admitted.
15. An appeal may be withdrawn at any time by the appellant by notifying the Appeals Administration Unit to that effect.

Composition of Appeals Committee

16. An Appeals Committee established by the Minister for the purposes of hearing and determining an appeal under Section 29 shall consist of three persons which shall include an Inspector, and two other persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, have the requisite expertise, experience and independence to serve on the Committee. One of these two persons will act as chairperson of the Committee.



Facilitation process

17. Where the Appeals Committee considers that it may be possible to facilitate agreement between the appellant and the school board of management (the parties to the appeal), notwithstanding any failure to reach agreement at local level within the school, a facilitator will be appointed by the Appeals Administration Unit to contact, or arrange to meet, the parties at the earliest opportunity. The facilitator so appointed shall not be a member of the Committee or a member of the Department's Inspectorate. Where the facilitator considers it desirable, the School Attendance Officer or Education Welfare Officer with responsibility for the school in question may be requested to assist the facilitation process.
18. The facilitator will attempt to broker an agreement between the parties to the appeal.
19. Where agreement is reached, the facilitator will provide the parties to the appeal with a copy of the agreement.
20. Where an appellant accepts the agreement reached during facilitation, no further appeal may be made to the Secretary General in respect of the original decision of the board of management which formed the basis of the appeal in the first instance.
21. A period of up to one week will generally be allowed for the facilitation process. This may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

Appeals hearing

22. Where it appears to the Committee, or to the facilitator appointed by the Committee, that agreement between the parties to the appeal is not possible within the relevant time constraints, the case will be referred for hearing by the Appeals Committee and a report of the facilitation process will be provided to the Appeals Committee.
23. A date, time and venue for the hearing will be arranged in consultation with all concerned.
24. The parties to the appeal will be informed at that stage of their right to submit any additional documentation in support of their case (that has not already been provided to the Appeals Administration Unit). Such additional information should be provided in time to enable the time limits set by paragraph 26 to be met. Where the appeal relates to a decision under paragraph 1 (a) or 1 (c), the National Educational Welfare Board may make a submission and such submission shall be made within the same time limits.
25. The parents, student, and, where the National Educational Welfare Board makes an appeal in accordance with its power under section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, a representative of the Board, may attend the hearing as, or on behalf of, the appellant. The board of management may designate two of its members, or one of its members and the school principal, to attend the hearing on its behalf. Subject to the prior consent of the Appeals Committee, either party to the appeal may also be accompanied at the hearing

by not more than two persons nominated by them for this purpose. Persons accompanying either party to the appeal will not be permitted to make statements at the hearing, save in exceptional circumstances where the Committee gives its consent.

26. The Committee may invite persons with relevant expertise to attend and make statements at the hearing.
27. In advance of the hearing the parties to the appeal will be provided, in confidence, with a complete set of documentation submitted in relation to the case in question for the purposes of the hearing. The parties will also be notified as to the persons who will be attending the hearing, including any persons specifically invited by the Committee. This information/ documentation should be provided no later than 3 days before the hearing.
28. Where either, or both, of the parties to the appeal are unable to attend the hearing, they should contact the Appeals Administration Unit no later than 3 days before the hearing so that the hearing may be rescheduled.
29. Where either, or both, of the parties to the appeal fail to attend the hearing, without having given prior notification to the Appeals Administration Unit, the hearing may proceed in their absence at the discretion of the Appeals Committee.
30. At the hearing both parties to the appeal will be given an opportunity to present their case. Both will have the right of reply and each will have the right to question the other through the chair.

31. The Committee may question both parties to the appeal, and seek the views of any other persons (see above) who may have been called.

Determination of Appeals

32. Appeals will be determined by the Committee in the light of all the facts presented to it, including the views of any persons called by it to the hearing, and having due regard to:
- the established practices within the school for dealing with issues/ grievances which are the subject matter of the appeal, including, where relevant and available, any statutory or non-statutory procedures, guidelines, regulations or other provisions in operation at any time,
 - the educational interests of the student who is the subject of the appeal,
 - the educational interests of all other students in the school,
 - the effective operation and management of the school,
 - any resource implications arising from the issues under appeal,
 - where relevant, the policy of the patrons and the board of management in respect of the characteristic spirit/ ethos of the school, and
 - such other matters as the Committee considers relevant.

33. In making its determination, the Committee may take advice from such persons as it considers appropriate.
34. Where a vote is required in order to establish the Committee's determination of an appeal, the matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the Committee members voting on the question. In the case of an equal division of votes, the chairperson of the Committee shall have a casting vote.
35. Notwithstanding paragraph 16, the Committee may hear and determine an appeal notwithstanding a vacancy for the time being in its membership.
36. The Committee shall, in writing, notify the Secretary General, or an officer appointed by the Secretary General under Section 29 (11), of its determination of the appeal, the reasons therefore and its recommendation as to the action to be taken.
37. The Secretary General, or officer appointed under Section 29 (11), shall, in writing, notify both parties of the determination of the appeal, the reasons therefore and, where necessary, will issue such directions to the school's board of management as he/she considers to be necessary for the purpose of remedying the matter which was the subject of the appeal. The board of management will be bound by such directions.

Review of procedures

These procedures may be reviewed from time to time by the Minister following consultation with the partners in education.

Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2016/2017 School Year

For Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2016/2017 School Year please see [Circular 0007/2016](#) and its appendices.

The Teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education in Catholic Primary schools

An integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum for primary schools is the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). There are four key documents that give an important insight into the required approach to RSE in a Catholic school in the Republic of Ireland. These are:

1. *Relationships and Sexuality Education; an aspect of Social, Personal and Health education. Curriculum and Guidelines for Primary Schools* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), 1996),
2. *SPHE Curriculum* (NCCA, 1999),
3. *Interim Guidelines on Relationships and Sexuality Education* (Irish Bishop's Conference, 2014),
4. *The Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (Irish Bishop's Conference, 2015).

From the above documents the following important points should be noted:

- a. The importance for a school of having a clearly articulated policy for RSE, rooted in the school's Catholic

ethos, adopted following consultation with parents, teachers and the Board of Management,

- b. The importance for a school of having material that is age and stage appropriate. This requirement is reflected in the suggested material and methodologies produced by the NCCA and contained in the recently published *Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (Irish Bishop's Conference, 2015) document.

CPSMA recommends that in a Catholic school RSE be taught in line with the documents listed 1–4 above.

Time in School

This section needs to be read in conjunction with page 70 of the Introduction to the 199 Curriculum and [Circular 11/1995](#) and [Circular 16/2014](#)

The School Year

The minimum number of teaching days per school year is 183 full school days. It is stressed that this is the minimum number which must be adhered to by all schools (and classes within a school). In no sense should this number be regarded as a maximum for any school.

Appendix A of [Circular 16/2014](#) gives details of the standardised school year from 2014/2015 onwards.

Arrangements in relation to the standardisation of the breaks at Christmas, Easter and mid-term in the first and second terms for the school year are agreed between parties to the Teachers' Conciliation Council and are

outlined up to the end of the 2016/17 school year in [Circular 16/2014](#)

The School Day

A full school day comprises of not less than five hours and 40 minutes. Allocations for curricular areas, as well as time frameworks are available on the [NCCA's Introduction to the Curriculum](#). However, this should be implemented in conjunction with [Circular 56/2011](#) (Literacy and Numeracy Strategy).

Under the Rules for National Schools, forenoon and afternoon breaks of five minutes each are allowed. (A total of ten minutes further for breaks). Where a recreation interval or breaks of a longer duration than the foregoing are taken (for example when children are allowed to have lunch in the classroom prior to the official commencement of the recreation interval) the length of the school day must be extended correspondingly.

Special Provisions for Infants and First Class

Schools are permitted to reduce the school day by one hour for children in infants and first class and the time required for a half attendance may be reduced by one half hour. The decision to apply this concession rests with the Board of Management. Such decisions should be dictated by the educational interests of the children.

The practice of sending junior infants home early from school for a prolonged period at the commencement of the school year is not allowed. It is considered that such a relaxation of the Rules beyond the first two weeks of the

school year cannot be justified. Use of this practice for a period in excess of two weeks will be regarded as a breach of the Rules.

The special provisions for infant or first class children do not exempt any teacher from attendance for the full period.

Contingency arrangements in the event of unforeseen school closures

([Circular 16/2014](#))

It is recognised that there is a need to include greater flexibility and to provide for contingency arrangements within the standardised school year to deal with unforeseen school closures.

Guidance for schools in relation to making up for time lost due to unforeseen school closures is included at Appendix B of this circular. This guidance sets out a structured approach to determining the measures to be put in place to make up for time lost. The guidance provides that subject to consensus at local level, any changes to normal practice that can be made to address the shortfalls should be put in place. Examples of how this might be achieved include:

- prioritising tuition over other non-tuition activities
- reducing where possible the length of mock/house examinations
- consideration of whether learning in the classroom should be prioritised over school tours, etc

If necessary, the school authority should then identify any available discretionary days that the school had planned to close that could be made available to make up for time lost.

Where the above measures are not considered adequate, contingency arrangements to make up for time lost due to extensive or prolonged unforeseen school closures may now also include either or both of the following:

- The February mid-term break may be reduced by up to three days subject to the requirement that all schools must be closed on the Thursday and Friday of the week in which this break falls.
- The Easter break may be reduced by up to three days by the school remaining open up to and including the Wednesday immediately preceding the Easter weekend. All schools must be closed on the Thursday and Friday immediately preceding the Easter weekend and remain closed for the remainder of the Easter break as set out in Appendix A of this circular.

The school must also take into account the need to provide adequate notice of any changes to the school calendar to pupils, parents and staff. Each school authority shall also provide to parents, at the beginning of each year, a calendar which includes details of school closures. It should be made clear that the calendar could be subject to change as part of contingency arrangements to make up for time lost due to unforeseen school closures.

Active and Relevant Circulars

For all active and relevant circulars please visit the [Circular Page of CPSMA](#) or the Department of Education and Skills [Circulars and Forms Page](#)

