



Newsletter

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A word from the General Secretary

Dear Principals and Chairpersons

This Newsletter deals with recruitment, distance learning and other current issues for schools. However, I am aware that you and your entire school community are more particularly concerned about the proposed return to school, next September.

CPSMA is engaged with the Department of Education and Skills and other education stakeholders in seeking clarity on the issues which arise specifically for primary schools in relation to the [Return to Work Safety Protocol](#) and will be advising schools in this regard as soon as possible.

Extraordinary work has been carried out over the past few months and schools should be very proud of their achievements during this pandemic.

I hope you and your families stay safe and well and I will be in contact again as soon as we have more clarity from the Department of Education and Skills in relation to the reopening of schools.

Seamus Mulcahy



Recruitment

CPSMA Guidance Note in relation to conducting interviews using video conferencing technology

During Covid-19, Boards may decide that they wish to conduct interviews remotely. CPSMA has issued comprehensive [Guidance for schools in relation to interviews using video conferencing](#).

The following should be noted in particular:

- CPSMA does not recommend the use of video conferencing technology for the purposes of conducting interviews for senior management positions, i.e. school Principal and Deputy Principal (both internal and external competition) in Catholic schools.
- CPSMA recommends that the interview process for such senior management positions should be conducted face to face, where possible, in compliance with relevant recruitment procedures and in compliance with [HSE social distancing protocols](#) and the [Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business](#).
- A Board of Management should always consult with its Patron to confirm its Patron's requirements in this regard prior to commencing any recruitment process.

Leadership and Management positions

DES has recently issued [Information Note TTC 0002/2020](#) on [Circular 0044/2019](#) for the Filling of Internal Leadership and Management Positions in Primary Schools during the Period of Covid-19 Restrictions. Accordingly:

- Schools may choose to continue filling positions now or at the beginning of the next school term.
- Schools will not be penalised if they leave the filling of these positions till next term. Accordingly, schools will not forfeit an unfilled AP I or AP II position and schools which would have been in a position to recruit a Deputy Principal internally, will retain this ability in the new school year.

Schools need to comply with [Information Note TTC 0002/2020](#) and [Circular 0044/2019](#) in relation to the filling of such positions. CPSMA contracts and related documentation for internal management positions can be accessed in the [Appointments](#) section of the CPSMA website under Leadership and Management Appointments.

Filling permanent teaching positions

All Dioceses have released their Main Panels at this stage and permanent positions which are not required for a CID holding teacher in the school, must be filled from the Main Panel. Schools should refer to [Circular 0018/2020](#) and the [FAQs to the Operation of the Redeployment Panel](#) for details on the methods of engaging with the panel.

Once a teacher has been selected for appointment, schools should issue the teacher with a letter of offer for a panel appointment. When written confirmation of the acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in the letter of offer has been received by email, the Board of Management must notify the Panel Operator within the following 24 hour period. This notification by the Chairperson of the Board of Management to the Panel Operator can be done verbally but must, without any delay, also be confirmed by email. The school must arrange for the Panel Update Form to be completed and forwarded to the Department's Primary Teacher Allocations Section. The form must be signed by the teacher and the Chairperson of the BoM. The school must also complete and submit the Primary Teacher Appointment Form to the Primary Teachers Payroll Section.



Schools should note that permanent positions which are not required for the Main Panel should be filled using the Supplementary Panel when this panel is released by the DES. In this regard schools are referred to [Circular 0064/2019](#) and the [FAQs in Relation to the Operation of this Supplementary Panel](#).

Retirements by teachers in October 2020

The DES has confirmed that where a teacher has given notice that he/she intends to retire in the **first** week of October 2020, that vacancy may be filled from the Main Panel now and the retiring teacher may remain on as an additional staff member until his/her retirement date. Vacancies arising from retirements after the first week of October 2020 must be filled in accordance with the normal recruitment arrangements.

Home School Liaison positions

The DES have confirmed that schools with HSCL positions which were due to be advertised this year, must proceed with the recruitment process. Positions should be advertised in the relevant schools by sending a copy of the advertisement directly to the designated contact address or email address of each teacher. DES has issued [Information Note SIU 0001/2020](#) on [Circular 0016/2019](#) in this regard. CPSMA has issued a [Guidance Note](#) for the filling of HSCL positions during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

Principal and Deputy Principal (open competition) positions

These positions are not subject to the Panel and must be filled in accordance with the procedures set out in [Circular 0044/2019](#). It is important to note that the consent of the Patron is required, if these positions are to be advertised during July or August.

Fixed term positions

It is important to note that fixed term positions may not be advertised in each Diocese until the Main Panel has cleared and the DES have given the Diocese the authority to proceed with the advertising of fixed term positions. Once this authority has been given, the positions may be filled in accordance with [Circular 0044/2019](#). CPSMA has created training webinars dealing with such recruitment process which can be accessed [here](#).

Substitute positions

Substitute positions covering maternity, parental and other such specified purpose leave may be advertised without reference to the Panel. Such recruitment must be in accordance with [Circular 0044/2019](#). CPSMA has created training webinars in relation to such recruitment which can be accessed [here](#).

SNAs

SNAs should be recruited in accordance with [Circular 0051/2019](#) and [Circular 0036/2020](#). At time of going to print, CPSMA has not received confirmation on whether such recruitment may take place using video conferencing. We will advise schools of any update on this.

General

Please note that all letters of offers and related documentation are available on on the [Appointments](#) section of our website. Please contact us on 01-629 2462 if you have any queries relating to recruitment.



Guidance on distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

1 Overview

School closures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have moved education from the classroom into the home. In this context, the Department of Education and Skills (the “DES”) has emphasised in its recent guidance¹ that the “continuity of schooling” during this unprecedented period is paramount. Whilst most schools have successfully embraced e-learning and digital technology at extremely short notice, remote learning poses its own risks and challenges, key ones of which are addressed below. Schools will need to address these issues going forward, as e-learning and digital technology are likely to have an ongoing role to play in our schools.

2 Adopting a “whole-school” approach

While many schools are now equipped with digital technology, teachers and SNAs have been using a wide range of platforms and modes of communication to engage with students. The DES has recommended the adoption of a “whole-school” approach (i.e. an agreed method of communication) between the school/teachers/SNAs and students to ensure consistency and so as not to overburden students or their parent(s)/guardian(s).

Teachers and SNAs should operate on one or more secure and accessible system(s) which have been approved by school management and parents. Staff should also be consulted regarding the platforms used. They must understand how the system works and guidance should be offered to all teachers and SNAs regarding equipment, software and security measures. In this regard, PDST has made a variety of information and resources available on its website.²

Although SNAs were to be nominated for temporary assignment to the HSE during the pandemic³, many SNAs are continuing to provide support to their allocated students through schools and under the direction of principals/class teachers. It is vital to ensure that any SNAs who are in direct contact with students are also following the agreed “whole-school” approach. In this regard, the SNAs’ work should, at the principal/class teachers’ direction, focus on supporting the particular care needs of pupils and should be monitored on an ongoing basis by the class teacher, who maintains primary responsibility for teaching, learning and the social and emotional development of pupils.

3 Communication with students/parents

To establish an effective “whole-school” approach, protocols should be put in place for communication during the period of distance learning and tailored solutions regarding the use of online platforms, must be assessed on a school-by-school basis.

[Circular 0038/2018](#) provides that schools should consult “with their school community, including teachers, students and parents regarding the use of smart phones, tablets and video recording devices with a view to developing a whole-school policy for their use or updating an existing one”.

As such, many schools may already have an Acceptable Use Policy (“AUP”) which sets out the parameters of technology usage in all aspects of engagement between teachers/SNAs, students

1 Department of Education and Skills, Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 7 April 2020.

2 See www.pdst.ie/distancelearning.

3 See Circular 0024/2020.



and parents. Schools should update their AUPs to reflect the increased use of online platforms and ensure that AUPs effectively inform and guide remote learning activities. Schools could refer to <https://www.webwise.ie/trending/distance-learning-safety-advice-and-considerations/> for helpful advice in this regard.

In all cases, if consent is the lawful basis being relied upon in respect of online learning, the consent of a child's parent(s)/guardian(s) must be sought in relation to the method of online learning and communication. This is particularly important where personal data is being uploaded to online platforms. In the current situation, consent can be sought by sending out forms via e-mail or text message to parent(s)/guardian(s) and schools should emphasise the importance of obtaining consents from parent(s)/guardian(s) to all members of staff.

Importantly, for child protection reasons, it is inadvisable for teachers/SNAs to conduct one-to-one virtual or remote sessions with a pupil unless a parent/guardian is present with the pupil and any child safeguarding measures applicable to in-person contact with pupils apply equally to online communications.

Below are some considerations particular to the specific platforms used by teachers/SNAs to communicate with their students.

3.1 Video

It is important that teachers/SNAs maintain safe and ethical use of the internet whilst engaging with students on video platforms such as Zoom/MS Teams etc. Rules should be agreed with parents and put in place for staff and pupils, e.g. pupils must be in a safe and appropriate location and should not have access to mobile phones. Teachers/SNAs should log out, mute or turn off the video as appropriate, disable chat functions and an agreed procedure should be in place to deal with any issues that arise, e.g. where a host (teacher/SNA) loses connection to the online platform. Teachers/SNAs should be conscious about what students can see in the background of the video (inappropriate artworks, personal photographs etc.). They should be wary of accidentally sharing screens with students or posting potentially inappropriate pictures and the taking of screenshots can also be prohibited in the AUP.

3.2 E-mail

Staff must follow any AUP/protocol for e-mail communication with students. They should only use secure work e-mail accounts and not their personal accounts for work related e-mails containing the personal data of students. Teachers/SNAs should ensure that they are sending e-mails to the correct recipient(s), particularly where the e-mails involve large amounts of personal data, to avoid data breaches. They should avoid using personal/confidential data in subject lines and ensure they are sending e-mails to the correct recipient(s), including the correct use of the "blind copy" function when e-mailing multiple people so as not to share other peoples' e-mail addresses.

3.3 Text messaging/WhatsApp

Whilst it is acceptable to text parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding their child, teachers/SNAs should not text/engage in texting with primary school students. Any contact via text message should be done via the parent(s)/guardian(s). Whilst WhatsApp can be a useful tool insofar as teachers/SNAs can send group messages and can check whether messages have been received properly and read by the receivers, WhatsApp and text messaging can pose particular risks from both a child protection and data protection perspective, for example where devices are lost or stolen.



4 Child protection

The school's duty of care to students has not changed or been reduced by the current pandemic and teachers should continue to be alert to the possibility that a child protection concern may arise. In such cases, schools must follow the relevant reporting procedures in the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.

Schools should update their child safeguarding statements and risk assessments to reflect the risks arising from COVID-19, e.g. youth produced sexual imagery (screenshots etc.), sexual abuse through the virtual learning environment and increased barriers to children reporting their concerns. Schools must also consider what additional safeguards should be put in place.

Schools must be cognisant as part of their duty of care to students of the increased risk of harassment/cyberbullying and/or sharing harmful or illegal content. This may involve making reference to online harassment/cyberbullying in the school's code of behaviour.

The DES has indicated that the requirement to provide a Child Protection Oversight Report ("CPOR") will not apply at board meetings held remotely during the current period. However, the Principal must maintain the relevant data and records for the CPOR which shall be provided at the next in-person meeting of the board. The information and data in that report must reflect cases arising since the previous CPOR was provided to the board.

5 Data protection

It is vital that personal data is protected during this time and it may be necessary to update schools' data protection policies, documents and protocols for the processing of personal data. Teachers/SNAs and all staff should only use the school's approved devices, networks, cloud sharing sites and other apps/programmes for communicating with students and they may also need to update their operating systems and anti-virus software to ensure all personal data is secure. They should also use effective access controls such as multi-factor authentication and strong passwords and, where available, encryption to restrict access to the device and to reduce risk if a device is stolen or misplaced. The school's trusted platforms should be outlined in its "whole-school" protocol/AUP.

As the current measures were introduced at short notice, many schools were unable to carry out sufficient due diligence/data impact risk assessments ("DPIA") on EdTech and it is noted in this regard that schools may have been offered certain learning platforms or tools free of charge. It is important that schools now carry out DPIAs on any new service/forms of processing that take place. In this regard, schools are referred to Step 10 of the the 12 steps listed in [Preparing for GDPR](#) on the [dataprotectionschools](#) website. Schools should ensure that they review suppliers' privacy notices, any associated policies, T&Cs and any data processing agreements that the schools may have in place with suppliers. Furthermore, they must ensure that they have a lawful basis for processing of personal data. Generally, schools are allowed to collect, process and retain certain personal data about employees and students for a variety of lawful purposes and are entitled to rely on a number of legal grounds⁴ to do so.

Finally, any concern that a data breach (i.e. where accidentally, inadvertently or unlawfully personal data is destroyed, lost, altered, disclosed, accessed, transmitted, stored or otherwise processed)

4 For example, the Education Act 1998 (as amended), Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Employment Equality Acts 1998 - 2015, the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004, the Health Act 1947, the Children First Act 2015, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017, the Teaching Council Acts 2001 - 2015 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.



has occurred must be reported to the principal/board of management immediately as, by law, the breach must be reported to the Data Protection Commission (“DPC”) within 72 hours of having become aware of it. The relevant data subject/parents may also need to be informed. It is worth noting that the DPC has indicated that it will take into account the unprecedented challenges faced by organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic should they receive a complaint. Notwithstanding the above, it is recommended that schools ensure to internally document and proactively communicate with the DPC/a data subject in relation to any delays in dealing with a data protection matter.

6 Conclusion

It is important that going forward schools set clear online conduct and communication guidelines for both students and staff on a “whole-school” basis, for example in an AUP. In particular, students and teachers/SNAs must clearly understand the boundaries of acceptable use of the various online platforms as well as the likely ramifications of over-stepping those boundaries. Schools must be vigilant and understand that their obligations under child protection and data protection law are heightened at the present time and that any issues must be dealt with under the appropriate school procedures. Where a student or a teacher/SNA does breach the AUP it may, in certain circumstances, be necessary to pursue the matter under the relevant disciplinary process or code of behaviour.

A checklist for schools engaging in distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is included on the following page. Please contact CPSMA on 01-629 2462 or info@cpsma.ie if you have any queries in relation to the above or for advice in the event of a particular issue arising.



Checklist for schools engaging in distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

No.	Action	Yes/No
1.	Has the school selected appropriate online learning platforms and modes of communication to engage with pupils/parents?	
2.	If so, has the school engaged with parents/guardians and staff in relation to this selection?	
3.	Does the school have up-to-date contact information for parents/guardians?	
4.	Is the school documenting communication with parent(s)/guardian(s)?	
5.	Has sufficient training/guidance been provided to staff/parents/pupils regarding the use of online platforms and distance learning?	
6.	Is the work of SNAs being directed by the class teacher?	
7.	Does the school have an Acceptable Usage Policy ("AUP")?	
8.	If so, does the AUP need to be updated to reflect the increased use of online learning platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic?	
9.	Are parents/guardians present with pupils during one-to-one interactions with teachers/SNAs?	
10.	Has the school updated its child safeguarding statement and risk assessments to reflect the additional risks arising from distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic? Are additional safeguards required?	
11.	Is the principal maintaining relevant data/records for the Child Protection Oversight Report to be provided at the next in-person meeting of the board of management?	
12.	Have accommodations been made for students who do not have access to computers/laptops/smartphones/tablets or internet at home?	
13.	Has the school reviewed its data protection policy/protocols for the processing of personal data in light of COVID-19?	
14.	Have appropriate security measures been taken by staff to ensure that personal data is secure, e.g. updating anti-virus software?	
15.	Have sufficient due diligence/data impact risk assessments been carried out by the school to identify and mitigate risks, e.g. for new online learning platforms used by the school.	

Marking the transition for 6th class pupils

CPSMA has received a number of queries in relation to marking the transition of 6th class pupils from primary school to secondary school, at the end of the academic year 2020.

Before coming to a decision relating to any proposed activities, schools must be cognisant of the following:

1. The most up-to-date and current public health advice for your area which may be obtained from the Health Service Executive (1850 24 1850).
2. The latest public health measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
3. The current phase of the Government's *Roadmap for reopening society and business*.
4. The practical organisation of any proposed activities including, but not limited to:
 - the need to maintain social/physical distancing
 - the potential for virus transfer on surfaces
 - the geography of school site
 - the transfer of materials
 - the manner of communication and direction to school community
 - all other relevant information.

There are a number of options open to schools when planning to mark this important transition, including:

- A virtual Mass: As Catholic schools we have a rich tradition in celebrating significant times in school life within our Catholic community. As part of this Mass, each child could be invited to send a photo of themselves to the school, which could then be displayed on the altar during the Mass. Graduation certificates could be blessed at this Mass and then sent to the children afterwards. As part of the blessing, the individual names of the pupils could be called out.
- If the Mass is pre-recorded it could also include pre-recorded clips from home, of pupils/staff/parents saying prayers readings or singing hymns to be inserted in the production.
- In considering the options to mark the graduation of the 6th class pupils, it may be worthwhile for staff to collate the various options and then open an online poll for the pupils to choose their preferred option. In this way, pupil voice is integrated into the ceremony itself.
- Dissemination of graduation certificates to pupils' homes can be done via post or email. If used as part of a virtual Mass to mark the occasion, perhaps they could be sent to children's homes and then presented to children by parent / guardian at an appropriate point during the ceremony.
- Compilation of a graduation booklet/Year Book, as part of ongoing distance learning. Each child in the class could have a dedicated page to include a variety of topics such as "My Memories of School", "My First Day in School", a bucket list for life, poetry or drawing. Entries could be returned to the school via platforms currently in use and compiled into booklet form to be shared with the class as a memory booklet.
- Goodbye photos – With clear parental consent for the processing of this data, photos of each of the children, with a goodbye message from each of them, could be forwarded for collation and shared on school website.



- Goodbye presentation – With clear parental consent for the processing of this data, video clips/ photos of each of the children could be forwarded by their parents, for collation as a video or digital presentation. Video clips/pictures of the pupils as they progressed through their primary school could also be used for this purpose. The presentation could then be shared on a school media platform or sent to pupils.
- Some schools may wish to consider inviting 6th class pupils to choose an appropriate Graduation “song”. The views of the pupils could be elicited online with regard to the choice of song. This could then be recorded “virtually”. There are many examples of this online in the last number of months for choirs of all ages. The “Together Apart” logo could be incorporated in some way in the virtual recording.
- The school could arrange for a graduation card to be posted to each child from the school, with a photo of the school, which could be signed by the principal and/or staff. An appropriate memento could be included with this card.

The President Michael D. Higgins has issued [a message to 6th Class pupils](#) which you may like to send to pupils and their parents.

School Reports

DES has recently issued a document [Supporting schools in providing end-of-year written reports to parents of children in primary school](#).

This provides guidance to schools on the provision of reports to parents in the circumstances of COVID-19. Schools should note that reports should be made available to parents within two weeks of the end of term to facilitate communication between the school and parents in relation to the reports, where required.

Retention of pupils in the same grade

[Circular 32/03](#) outlines exceptional circumstances in which a pupil might be considered for retention in the same grade for two school years. In general, gaps in pupils’ learning arising solely due to the emergency closure of schools should not result in a pupil repeating a year. When pupils start back in school, the principal and teachers can assess their needs and adapt their teaching programme so that any gaps in their learning resulting from the emergency closure of schools can be addressed. Outside of this, schools should process requests from parents for pupils to repeat a year in the usual manner in accordance with [Circular 32/03](#).

Primary Staffing Appeals Board

The next meeting of the Primary Staffing Appeals Board to deal with appeals for the 2020/21 school year will be held in June. The closing date for submission of appeals is Monday 15th June 2020. Appeals must be submitted to Primary Allocations Section, Department of Education and Skills, Athlone, on the standard application form (See Appendices F: (a)-(g) of Circular 0018/2020).



Teaching Council Note on Droichead Interim Measures

“Due to the COVID 19 outbreak and the unprecedented situation of school closures, the Teaching Council has reviewed its position in relation to newly qualified teachers (NQTs) engaging in Droichead in 2019/2020 in collaboration with their Profession Support Team (PST) members. Additional flexibility is being introduced to support NQTs and PSTs in completing the process.

“These arrangements balance the core principles of the policy, which is the school based supportive process outlined in Strand A, coupled with engagement in the additional professional learning activities including Cluster Meetings as set out in Strand B, see below:

- Strand A (school based) relates to the in-school support including observations and professional discussions.
- Strand B (Professional Learning Activities) relates to Cluster Meeting(s) and professional learning activities.
- The minimum time requirement for Strand A is 60 days (Primary) and 200 hours (Post-primary) from the date listed on the confirmation email issued to the NQT at the start of the process.

“The Teaching Council has contacted all NQTs who are still engaged in Droichead to inform them of these interim measures and provide them with the information contained in this linked document – [Droichead Covid-19 Guidelines for NQTs 2019/2020](#).

“The NIPT on behalf of the Teaching Council has provided all schools involved in Droichead 2019/2020 with the attached interim measure guidelines for the PST – [Droichead Covid-19 Guidelines for PSTs 2019/2020](#).

“These documents were developed in consultation with the Department of Education and Skills and the Inspectorate.

“Additional information is also available on the Council’s website [here](#) and also in the news section.

“It is important to note that where teachers are unable to finish the Droichead process due to Covid 19 and they will be eligible to apply for and be granted an extension to their period of registration.

Next steps

1. “In order to deal with queries efficiently the Teaching Council and NIPT have agreed the following:
 - NQTs are advised to contact conditions@teachingcouncil.ie if their queries are not addressed in their attached document.
 - NIPT has set up a dedicated email account (droicheadinterimmeasures@teacherinduction.ie) which PST members are welcome to use in case their query is not addressed in the attached documents.
2. “It is the Council’s intention to develop FAQs in consultation with NIPT to address the most common queries received and it will be published on the websites in due course The FAQs will augment the information provided in the attached documentation.”



Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

Inspire Workplaces are the current contracted providers of the Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme (EAWP) for teachers, Special Needs Assistants and secretaries and caretakers employed under the 1978/79 Scheme. This contract is due to expire on the 26th July, 2020.

Following a tendering process, a new framework has recently been put in place by the Office of Public Procurement (OGP). Spectrum Life has been awarded the new contract and will replace Inspire Wellbeing from 27th July 2020.

In the meantime, Inspire Workplaces will continue to provide its full service until 26th July 2020. Any individual availing of Inspire Workplaces' services will be allowed to complete their programme with them.

Principals and Boards of Management should note the details for Inspire Workplaces below, in case they are required for teachers or other staff members.



[Inspire Workplaces'](#) dedicated phone line, on which they provide confidential free telephone counselling and advice, is **1800 411 057**. They also have [self help resources](#) which are very helpful and which can be accessed without having to engage with one of Inspire team.

Monitoring and Reporting Annual Energy Use

SEAI extended the deadline for schools to monitor and report annual energy use to 29 May 2020. You will find support available here <https://www.seai.ie/business-and-public-sector/public-sector/monitoring-and-reporting/for-schools/> and the helpdesk is open at mandr@seai.ie or 01-808 2012 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Board meetings and video conferencing

CPSMA has issued [Guidance](#) for Boards of Management in relation to holding meetings by video conference.



CPSMA Membership 2020/2021

CPSMA wishes to thank you for your subscription for the current school year. The annual membership subscription for the period 1st September 2020 to 31st August 2021 is now due.

The Department of Education and Skills has confirmed that membership of CPSMA is an appropriate school expense payable by the Board of Management. One third of your annual membership subscription, funds in part, the work of the Patron in your diocese, supporting Boards of Management and Principals at a local level.

Membership benefits include the following:

- Specialised advice tailored to individual schools
- Access to the members section of the CPSMA website
- CPSMA Newsletter
- Board of Management training
- Seminars for Principals
- CPSMA Member's App

An email will issue shortly to all schools with the Membership Form and the applicable subscription rates. Payment should be made on or before **30th June 2020** by one of the following methods:

A. Online Payment

Log on at www.cpsma.ie.

Click on the Membership Renewal tab and follow the online prompts.

Please indicate on the Membership Renewal Form that payment has been made online.

B. Electronic Payment

Membership may be renewed using the EFT system. Our bank details are as follows:

IBAN: IE73 ULSB 98 60 95 10621585 **BIC:** ULSBIE2D

NB. Please insert the school roll number in the remittance line/message for receiver to enable us to identify your school as making the payment.

Please indicate on the Membership Renewal Form that payment has been made by EFT.

C. Cheque Payment

We request, if at all possible, that this year's membership is paid via online banking or using EFT. If this is not possible, cheques can be accepted, but may take longer to process, due to limited access to our office during the pandemic. We apologise for this in advance.

Please indicate on the Membership Renewal Form that payment has been made by cheque.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your membership, please contact CPSMA on 01-629 2462.



FSSU – Electronic Banking



1. Introduction

We are regularly asked by schools if it is a good idea to use electronic or internet banking for payments such as paying wages or suppliers.

Some schools still use cheques as the preferred method for settling all payments. However, the use of cheques has become more expensive and time consuming. Banking charges associated with electronic banking are considerably cheaper than cheques. Accordingly, we would encourage all schools to move in this direction as soon as possible. Under the National Payments Plan, public sector bodies are encouraged to move towards electronic banking.

Section 17.7 (b) of the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2019 – 2023 states that:

“The Board must satisfy itself that proper internal controls are in place for all financial transactions. The Board shall ensure that appropriate controls are in place in relation to the use of any school credit card, online banking etc. These shall include appropriate protocols and procedures for the approval of user(s), custody of the card concerned, authorisation of payments, agreed payment limits and the supply of supporting documentation and records. The Board shall not use debit cards for school expenditure.”

2. Please follow the steps below when moving to electronic banking for payments

- Approval must first be obtained from the Board of Management for the use of electronic banking by the school. This approval should be included and approved in the minutes of the board meeting.
- Electronic payments are subject to the same rules as a cheque payment and therefore must be approved by two of the nominated signatories of the board. The Treasurer must be one of the signatories for each transaction. The Chairperson can nominate another board member to act as signatory in his/her absence.
- In line with good financial practice, there should be a clear division of duties. The person preparing the payment should not be one of the approvers of the payment.
- Access to approval of electronic payments must be password/PIN protected. It is not permissible for a bank approver/signatory to share logon details/PIN with other users.
- Any additions and amendments to payees must be approved by the authorised signatories.
- It is the responsibility of the board to ensure that the bank is aware of these controls and that the electronic banking system implemented complies fully.
- The FSSU has issued a separate [Financial Guideline on the appropriate use of credit cards](#).

3. Contacting your school's bank

The board members approved by the board to sign cheques must also approve electronic payments. It is important to make this clear to your bank when setting up electronic payments from the bank account. When contacting the bank, the school will need to provide their account number, phone number etc.

For schools that bank with AIB, each school should contact their Relationship Manager at local branch level. The Relationship Manager can assist in registering them for online banking and any other issues they may face.

For schools that bank with Bank of Ireland, it is Digital Banking Service who deal with schools if assistance is required Their number is 1850 264265 and their email is electronic.banking@boi.com.

For schools that bank with Permanent TSB each school should contact their local branch level or contact the Business Banking Team at 1890 500 177 or 01 215 1363.

For schools that bank with Ulster Bank, it is the Digital Applications Team who deal with schools if assistance is required. Their number is 1800 300 36.

If you need any further information please email primary@fssu.ie or phone (01) 910 4020

Financial Support Services Unit, May 2020



Recent Department of Education and Skills Documents

- 02 April –28 May 2020: [Guidance documents for schools and parents on continuity of learning](#)
- 19 May 2020: [Supporting schools in providing end-of-year written reports to parents of children in primary school](#)
- 15 May 2020: [Guidance for access to schools from 18 May 2020](#)
- 27 April 2020: [Cancellation of Standardised Testing in Primary Schools 2019/2020](#)
- 01 April 2020: [Schools administration during the current public health emergency](#)
- 25 March 2020: [Letter to principals and teachers regarding social distancing](#)
- 13 March 2020: [Letter to principals and teachers regarding continuity of teaching and learning.](#)

Recent Department of Education and Skills Circulars

- 0038/2020 [Revision of Capitation Grant Rates for recognised Primary Schools in 2020](#)
- 0036/2020 [Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants \(SNAs\) - Supplementary Assignment Arrangements for the 2020/2021 school year](#)
- 0034/2020 [Revision of Application of Additional Increments awarded in relation to New Entrants under the Public Services Stability Agreement 2018 - 2020](#)
- 0033/2020 [Revision of 2011 Entrant Teacher Salaries with effect from 1 March 2020 – Application of Additional Increments](#)
- 0032/2020 [Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure – 2019/2020 School Year €10m funding to issue to primary and post-primary schools](#)
- 0031/2020 [Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure – 2019/2020 School Year](#)
- 0030/2020 [Special Needs Assistant Allocations for the 2020/21 School Year for Mainstream Classes in Primary and Post Primary Schools](#)
- 0029/2020 [Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs \(Autism Spectrum Disorder\)](#)
- 0027/2020 [COVID-19: Temporary assignment arrangements for certain staff in the education and training sector](#)
- 0024/2020 [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Delay Phase: Arrangements for teachers and special needs assistants employed in recognised primary and post-primary schools](#)

