



# Newsletter

No. 65 June 2021

## Message from General Secretary

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### Dear Principal and Chairperson,

Welcome to the last CPSMA Newsletter of the 20/21 school year. It has been another challenging school year, once again noteworthy by the extraordinary efforts of school communities to continue to provide an education for primary and special school pupils. School leaders should be very proud of their achievements.

A wise mentor once told me that it is more important to manage your energy than to manage your time, and the key to managing energy is to take the time for recovery. I sincerely hope that you do get the opportunity to do so this summer.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a word of thanks to Miriam McCabe who has been working as an Education Executive with CPSMA for the last five years. Miriam has been a valued member of the team, juggling her role as an advisor to principals and chairpersons, with many other training and advocacy roles on behalf of CPSMA, including the design and delivery of resources for Catholic Schools Week and representing CPSMA on the NCCA, always bringing her experience as a teaching principal to the forefront of her work with CPSMA. I wish Miriam the very best on her return to her role as a school principal.

CPSMA will be open as usual throughout the summer months if required. If you need us, please don't hesitate to phone or email us.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir as ucht bhúr gceannaireacht ghníomhach le linn na bliana seo. Tá súil agam go mbeidh laethanta níos fearr agus níos simplí gan stró sa bhliain seo chugainn, bliain lán le dhóchas le deiseanna éagsúla d'ar scoileanna.

*Seamus Mulcahy*

*Beidh an oifig CPSMA fós ar oscailt i rith an tsamhraidh seo chugainn. Má tá tacaíocht de dhíth ort, déan teagmháil linn ar 01-6292492 nó [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie).  
Tá súil againn go mbeidh laethana saoire scoile suaimhneach agat.*

An Fhoireann CPSMA



## Recruitment

**NOTE:** *The Department of Education has confirmed that the shortened timelines introduced during the pandemic last year are still applicable and accordingly positions are only required to be advertised for seven days and only five days notice of interview is required.*

### **Filling permanent teaching positions (other than principal/deputy principal open competition positions)**

Most Dioceses have cleared their **Main Panels** at this stage and permanent positions which were not required for a CID holding teacher in the school, will have been filled from the Main Panel. (See [Circular 0019/2021](#), and [FAQ document on Circular 0019/2021 Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools](#) in this regard).

Permanent positions not required for the Main Panel may be filled using the Supplementary Panel once these Panels have been released in the relevant panel area. (See [Arrangements for the Operation of the Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2021/22 school year – FAQs to Circular 0078/2020](#) for details of how to engage with this panel.) Please note that fixed term positions may **not** be filled using the Supplementary Panel.

Once a teacher has been selected for appointment from either the Main or the Supplementary Panel, schools should issue the teacher with a [Letter of Offer for a Panel Appointment](#) (Checklist available [here](#)).

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.

The school should arrange for the [Main Panel update form](#) or the [Supplementary Panel update form](#) to be completed and forwarded to the Department's Primary Teacher Allocations Section. [The 2021/2022 Primary Teacher Appointment Form](#) should then be sent to the Primary Teachers Payroll Section.

### **Filling 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.

Once a principal or deputy principal has been selected for appointment, schools should issue a [Letter of Offer for a Principal/Deputy Principal \(Open Competition\)](#), (Checklist available [here](#)). [The 2021/2022 Primary Teacher Appointment Form](#) should be sent to the Primary Teachers Payroll Section of the Department of Education.

### **Fixed term positions**

It is important to note that fixed term positions may now be advertised in Dioceses where the Main Panel has cleared and the Department has given the Diocese the authority to proceed with the advertising of fixed term positions. The positions should be filled in accordance with [Circular 0044/2019](#).



In panel areas where the Main Panel has not cleared, schools may advertise their fixed-term vacancies, subject to the following line being included in the advertisement:

“The filling of this post is subject to the post not being required for the main panel redeployment process”.

The above line is to cover the potential that a fixed-term post may still be required for a teacher on the Main Panel or one who may be placed on the main panel at a later stage.

Once a teacher has been selected for appointment, schools should issue a [Letter of offer for a fixed term contract](#) (Checklist available [here](#)) and a [Fixed Term contract of employment](#) (Checklist available [here](#)). A [2021/2022 Primary Teachers Appointment Form](#) should be completed and returned to the Primary Teachers Payroll Division of the Department of Education.

### **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](#).

Once a teacher has been selected for appointment, schools should issue a [Letter of offer for specified purpose contract](#) (Checklist available [here](#)), and a [Contract for specified purpose](#) (Checklist available [here](#).)

### **Garda Vetting of teachers**

Schools should ensure that all teachers have complied with Garda vetting requirements (set out in [Circular 0031/2016](#)) *prior* to taking up employment with the school. The Teaching Council processes the vetting of teachers and teachers should be requested to share a link to their Garda vetting with the school via the Digitary CORE software provided by the Teaching Council. This will be in the form of an email containing a link, which when clicked on, will display the vetting disclosure. The school should print a copy of the vetting disclosure to keep on file. Teachers should also complete a Statutory Declaration and Form of Undertaking prior to employment in the school.

### **Recruitment of SNAs**

SNAs should be recruited in accordance with [Circular 0051/2019](#) and [Circular 0026/2021](#).

Once an SNA has been selected for appointment, subject to vetting and Medmark approval, they should be issued with a contract of employment available from [CPSMA](#). A completed [SNA Appointment Form](#) should be sent to the Non Teaching Staff Payroll Division of the Department of Education.

### **Garda vetting of SNA's**

All SNAs are required to be vetted by the school in which they are to be employed via the local Diocesan Education Office. They must complete a Statutory Declaration and Form of Undertaking prior to commencing employment with the school. (See [Circular 0031/2016](#) in this regard).



## General Matters

It is important that letters of offer and contracts, where relevant should be issued and completed before an employee commences employment in a school. Please note that in the case of permanent positions, there is no permanent contract required and a letter of offer signed by both parties will suffice.

CPSMA has designed step by step [Training in Recruitment](#) for all positions which may be helpful to schools.

CPSMA has prepared [Guidance](#) on conducting interviews during a pandemic which may be useful to schools. CPSMA has also prepared [Guidance](#) on conducting Interviews using video conferencing technology which may be of assistance to schools. The Patron should always be consulted to confirm its requirements in this regard prior to commencing any recruitment process. CPSMA does not recommend the use of video conferencing technology for the purposes of conducting interviews for senior management positions.

## School Communication

During the current pandemic, schools adopted new methods of communicating with parents, to assist with the online learning of their pupils. While we are still not clear of the pandemic, schools might take the opportunity now to review their communication policy for the forthcoming school year. As no two schools are the same, there is no communication policy which suits every school. However, from calls to the office, CPSMA have become aware of a number of issues for schools, which might be worth considering as part of any review.

There appears to be an increase in the number of complaints coming to schools via email. Where previously, a parent may have rung the school to discuss an issue, such calls are in many cases now being replaced by lengthy emails to the school, often overnight.

We would suggest that you do not respond to these concerns or complaints in writing. The emails should be treated in the same way as a call or a note to the office, requiring a call back to discuss the matter in the first instance, followed by a meeting, if necessary. It has been our experience that emails back and forth do not assist in the resolution of a problem and can often make things worse.

The pandemic has facilitated direct lines of communication such as email between class teachers and parents, which were set up for remote learning. This can be convenient for the transmission of day to day messages regarding illness or homework. However, there appears to be an increased number of emails from parents to class teachers containing complaints.

Again, it would not be advisable to respond in writing to emails containing complaints. These matters should be discussed with parents by phone, or if necessary, in person and ultimately in accordance with the parental complaints procedure.

There is often a feeling of pressure to respond to emails immediately, yet in reality, there is no obligation to respond urgently to the content of an email.

The trouble with responding to an email is that hours are often spent choosing words with care and sending a carefully thought out response, only to receive a return email immediately or the very next day, requiring another considered response.



We would suggest that you:

- Consider having a staff discussion around the use of email with staff. Some schools may wish teachers to close their current email accounts so that correspondence from parents is not received in this way. Other schools may be happy to facilitate some email communication between class teacher and parent in relation to illness or brief messages etc.

If needs be the schools communication policy can be reviewed and communicated to the school community.

## Board of Management Training

Due to the pandemic, training for Boards of Management was online this year and thanks to so many of you who attended our webinars. In the [Webinar](#) section of our website, we now have webinars on the following topics:

Appointments	Board of Management	Child Protection	Data Protection
Advertising	Functions and Responsibilities	Introduction	Podcast
Shortlisting	Roles and Responsibilities	Child Protection Oversight Report	Toolkit
Interview	Board Meetings	Child Safeguarding Statement	Webinar
Post-Interview		Webinar – 18th March 2021	

<b>Admissions to School</b>	<b>Health and Safety</b>
<b>School Finances – Role of Treasurer</b>	<b>Managing our Schools – A legal perspective</b>
<b>Staffing Schedule 2021/2022</b>	<b>Return to School – Aug 2020</b>

## Standardised Testing and Reports

The results of standardised tests must be uploaded onto the Esinet portal on or before **Wednesday 23rd June 2021**. Schools are referred to [Circular 0018/2021](#) for more information in this regard.

In order to enter and approve the data schools should log on to the Esinet portal, click on 'School Data Collection', and then 'Literacy and Numeracy, read the instructions before clicking 'Continue'. It is particularly important that all schools, including special or infant schools without a second class, read and follow the directions in the step-by-step guide to uploading the returns on the Department's website.

### Reporting and Using the Results of Assessments to Improve Pupil Learning

Schools are reminded of their reporting obligations as per Part 7 of [Circular 0056/2011](#). These include:

- Reporting to parents: Schools are reminded that they should issue a written report, explaining the results to parents in sufficient time, before the closure of the school for the summer vacation, to allow parents a reasonable opportunity to seek meetings with the teacher(s) and/or principal to discuss the written report, if necessary. Information for parents on understanding standardised test scores can be found [here](#) on the ncca.ie website.



- Using report card templates: All primary schools must use the standard report card template (available at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)) for reporting to parents on pupils' progress and achievement at school;
- Reporting information from standardised tests to their board of management;
- Transferring assessment data in instances when pupils move to a different school;
- Reporting standardised test results to the Department of Education via Esinet portal – [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

### **Additional information for the 2020/21 school year**

- As per [Guidance on Continuity of Schooling – for Primary Schools](#) parents should be provided with a summary of their children's learning progress and achievement as normal, despite the transition for pupils to remote learning and back to face-to-face teaching and learning. Reports provided should also consider the child's remote learning experiences, although due to a range of circumstances, the engagement of some pupils with the teacher may have been limited. This should not be reflected negatively in the report.
- In light of the school closure period as a result of COVID-19 during the 2020/21 school year, schools should report on the number of days attended out of the number of school days that the school was open. This approach could be explained in a cover letter to parents which accompanies the report.

### **Transitions – Primary school to Post Primary school**

Since 2014/15, schools are required to use the Education Passport materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information at the end of sixth class. Schools should ensure that an Education Passport for each pupil is sent to the relevant post primary school following confirmation of enrolment and, ideally, by the end of June. All materials supporting this process are available at [www.ncca.ie/transfer](http://www.ncca.ie/transfer).

The transfer of children in need of additional support can be facilitated through the NEPS Student Transfer Form which should be completed and signed by parents before sending to the relevant post-primary school. To ensure the allocation of specialised resources, such as special needs assistants, assistive technology or school transport, in a timely manner NCSE application deadlines should be considered. All materials supporting this process are available [here](#).

## **NCSE Forms**

The NCSE has recently published a number of documents on its website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie) which schools may utilise:

- [Guidelines for an exceptional review](#)
- [School leavers](#)
- [Guidance for Special Schools](#)
- [Guidance for Mainstream with Special classes 2021/2022](#)



## Summer Programme 2021

Schools are advised that documents relating to the Summer Programme 2021 are available as follows:

Summer Programme (School Based) 2021	Summer Programme (Home Based) 2021
<a href="#">Primary Summer Programmes Letter to Principals</a>	<a href="#">Letter to Principals</a>
<a href="#">Summer Programme for Primary Schools</a>	<a href="#">Overview for Parents, Teachers &amp; SNAs</a>
<a href="#">Summer Programme Guidance for Mainstream &amp; Special Schools</a>	<a href="#">Guidance for Teaching &amp; Learning</a>
<a href="#">DEIS Summer Camps Teacher Handbook</a>	<a href="#">Covid-19 Guidance</a>
<a href="#">Summer Programme Online Expression of Interest</a>	<a href="#">Summer Programme Grand Claim Form</a>

We understand from the Department of Education that they welcome queries from schools enquiring about taking part and all enquiries, including requests for additional supports for children, should be made to [schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie](mailto:schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie) or contact the Department on 0906484292

## Digital Strategy for Schools Project

The Department of Education has begun a consultation process in advance of the creation of a new Digital Strategy for Schools, following on from the previous [Strategy](#) which ran from 2015–2020. The aim is to implement strategic approach to further embed digital technologies in schools under four themes:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Using ICT
- Teacher Professional Learning
- Leadership, Research and Policy
- ICT Infrastructure

It will also address challenges and gaps identified in the previous strategy and will hope to align with the [EU Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027](#).

When the data from these sources is collated, the Department will use focus groups and engage in bilateral discussions with interested parties to analyse the findings, issue a baseline report and identify the themes for further exploration.

As part of the consultation framework, a consultative group, made up of Departmental representatives and a range of primary and secondary school bodies and agencies, has also been established. It aims to provide input into the overall development of the strategy and the themes that should be addressed.

CPSMA is representing the primary management bodies on this group and if any members have opinions or ideas in relation to the direction of new Digital Strategy for Schools, please email them to [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie). We would love to hear from you.



# Inspectorate Evaluation of Remote Teaching And Learning (ERTAL) Framework

The Inspectorate has recently invited stakeholders to make submissions on their views on the recently piloted Evaluation of Remote Teaching and Learning framework. The evaluation took place during the period of school closures and relates to the remote teaching and learning that took place during that time. The focus of the evaluation was on schools' provision for remote teaching and learning during periods of partial or full closure of school buildings.

The evaluation incorporated an initial research phase as well as two pilot phases of inspection in 26 primary schools. Inspectors observed and reviewed live lessons, recorded lessons and other supporting materials and resources. The perspectives of pupils and parents were gathered via online surveys and meetings and dialogue also took place with teachers and school leaders. Oral feedback was given to the principal and others and the school also subsequently received a written report.

You can read the CPSMA submission [here](#).

## Recent Circulars

- 0021/2021 [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants](#)
- 0024/2021 [Revised Payment Mechanism for Hourly-Paid Bus Escorts with effect from the commencement of the 2021/2022 Academic Year Cessation of "Rolled-up Holiday Pay"](#)
- 0025/2021 [Allocation of Assistant Principal Posts 2021/2022](#)
- 0026/2021 [Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants \(SNAs\) – Supplementary Assignment Arrangements for the 2021/2022 school year](#)
- 0027/2021 [Cost Limits for Primary School Buildings](#)
- 0029/2021 [Special Needs Assistant Allocations for the 2021/22 School Year for Mainstream Classes in Primary and Post Primary Schools](#)
- 0030/2021 [Parent's Leave Scheme For Registered Teachers employed In Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools](#)
- 0032/2021 [Arrangements for Inspectorate Engagement with Primary and Special Schools 2021/2022 School Year](#)
- 0035/2021 [Parent's Leave Scheme for Special Needs Assistants employed In Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools](#)

**CPSMA remains open for July and August  
so please feel free to phone us on 01-6292462  
or email us on [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie)  
to assist with any queries arising  
during the summer months.**





# Your Employee Assistance Service In The Moment Support

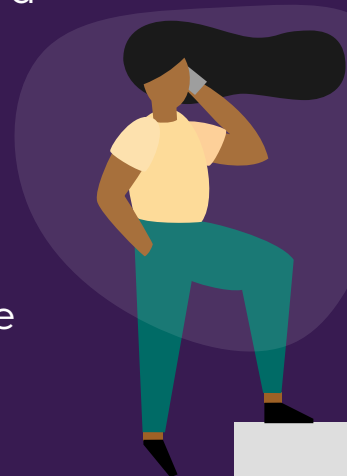
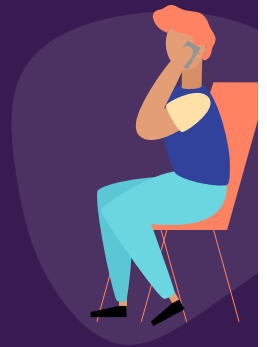
**Your EAS is available 24/7, 365 days a year and offers in the moment support to employees.** Our team is always there to chat and provide immediate support for multiple concerns and difficulties - in the workplace or at home. EAS support is there for you to process how you are feeling and get advice in the moment, as you need it.

**If you are experiencing a crisis or just want someone to talk to urgently,** you can access your EAS at any time to speak freely with a Case Manager and they will provide support and guidance.

**Calls are not limited in length or frequency.** You are free to access

this type of support for an unlimited number of times. (scheduled sessions of counselling may be recommended if there is a recurring issue)

**You can also call for advice on supporting another team member or colleague** (all calls are confidential).



**You can reach your EAS Service to speak to a Case Manager on: Freephone: 1800 814 243  
SMS & WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010**



# Sign Up to Your Folláine le Chéile Online Portal!

Access the following supports here:

- **Digital Gym**  
Up to 5 gym classes per day.
- **Digital Wellbeing Series**  
Seminars every Wednesday.
- **Be Calm**  
Up to 43 different guided mediations.
- Additionally, track your steps and kilometers, access up to 250+ recipes, log and track your calories, access supports in stress management, sleeping better, dealing with anxiety, mindfulness parenting and more!



**Access Your Wellbeing Portal:**

<https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login>

Organisation Code: yV11U17

