



Newsletter

No. 67 November 2021

Message from General Secretary

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Dear Chairpersons and Principals,

From the calls and queries we have received since September, it is clear that this year has been far more difficult to deal with than last year, as schools have had to contend with the substitute crisis, on top of the pandemic, as well as the usual challenges which present themselves in primary schools on an annual basis.

CPSMA can support your school through our advice line and many of you have shared your concerns with us this year so far. We also take every opportunity to highlight your situation to the Department of Education, although at times it must seem like nobody is listening. We know the huge efforts you are making, despite the challenges and we want to support you in the best way possible.

So, please call us on 01-629 2462 or email us at info@cpsma.ie and let us know how we can help.

Ní mór dúinn a chreidiúint go bhfuil laethanta níos fearr ag teacht go luath.

Seamus Mulcahy



Antigen tests

The Department of Education has issued information to [school principals](#) and to [parents](#) regarding antigen testing. In the event of a positive COVID-19 case in a pod, the school principal is requested to contact parents of the other children in the pod, inform them of the case and advise them on how to obtain antigen tests for their child. No details of any child should be given out. Children with positive antigen tests should seek a PCR test as soon as possible. Notwithstanding antigen testing, the message needs to be clear to all parents that symptomatic children should not come to school.

Nine steps to take in the event of a COVID-19 case in your school

The following may be of assistance to schools:

- Step 1: Contact the principals' helpline on **01-240 8785** or if you have difficulty getting through, email covid19_alert@education.gov.ie. It is important that the HSE are kept advised of the incidence of COVID-19 in schools.
- Step 2: Contact parents of children in the child's pod to inform them of the positive case and advise them on how to apply for antigen tests. Template text and template email are contained in [letter to principals above](#) for easy reference. No details of any child should be given to parents.
- Step 3: If another child in the class outside of the pod tests positive, parents of the entire class should be contacted by text and email.
- Step 4: Remind staff to be extra vigilant and not to attend school with any symptoms.
- Step 5: Check latest HSE advice relating to [close contacts](#) and [quick guide to isolation](#).
- Step 6: In the event that teachers or SNAs are absent due to COVID-19, refer to [Circular 0042/2021](#) or any amendment thereto for details in relation to the different types of leave.
- Step 7: In the event that ancillary staff are absent due to COVID-19, refer to the [Citizens' Advice Bureau](#) webpage for information on COVID-19 leave for such staff.
- Step 8: [Information Note SD 0001/2021](#) details different categories of substitutes. All substitutes without a Teaching Council number are subject to the 5 day rule and cannot be employed for more than five days in a row in school. Substitutes with a Teaching Council number are not restricted in this manner.
- Step 9: Many schools are having major difficulties sourcing substitute teachers. In the event that your school is having exceptional difficulties remaining open, please contact our advice line on 01-629 2462 or email us at info@cpsma.ie.



Child protection update

The Inspectorate have sent a [letter](#) to schools advising of their proposed inspection regime between now and the end of the year. Incidental inspections will not now be carried out till January 2021. There will still be Child Protection Level 1 inspections, which is an area that has caused some confusion. CPSMA met with the Inspectorate recently to seek to clarify matters.

Essentially, a new mandatory [Template 1](#) was developed in March 2021 combining the Child Safeguarding Statement and the Risk Assessment in one merged document, where previously there had been two separate documents. There is a requirement for each board to review its Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) annually and from January 2022 onwards, this template will be required to be used by a board when reviewing its CSS.

There are additional examples of policies and practices to address risks of harm, contained in the updated risk assessment section of the Template. These have been included to assist schools and to draw attention to common risks and mitigation measures, but they do not have to be included in each school's risk assessment. The Inspectorate wishes to see that each school has considered its own particular risks and has inserted mitigation measures appropriate to these risks in its document. For example, schools with hydrotherapy pools or showering facilities should include references to these areas in their risk assessments.

Another common area of concern relates to the requirement to change the name of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in the event that he/she is absent. The Inspectorate has clarified that short term absences of less than a month do not require a change of name. However, a longer term absence, in excess of a month, would require a change of DLP in the CSS and at the entrance to the school.

It is a requirement that all teachers visited by the Inspectorate have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons. In this regard a school must ensure that teachers have completed training in this area. The [PDST Child Protection Training](#) in the Child Protection Section of our website would be appropriate here and teachers could review this each year. It might also be helpful to include child protection as a regular item for discussion at staff meetings. Teachers should have a copy of the CSS in their classrooms, to which substitute teachers could be referred. Substitute teachers should be reminded that if they have concerns of a child protection nature, they should bring them to the DLP.

CPSMA have prepared a short [Podcast](#) with the above information.

Finally, as boards meet remotely again, schools should be cognisant of the fact that Child Protection Oversight Reports (CPOR) may not be given remotely, unless there are no cases to report in each category of the CPOR. CPSMA [Guidance](#) for boards meeting remotely is available to members.



Admissions for the 2022/2023 school year

Members are reminded that schools are required to publish their Annual Admission Notice at least one week before applications for admissions for the 2022/2023 school year are received by the school. CPSMA has prepared a series of template admission documents to assist schools in managing their admission procedures. The following template documents are available to members:

- [Guidance Note on the use of CPSMA template Admission Documents.](#)
- [Template Application Form for Admission to Junior Infants.](#)
- [Template Letter of Offer of Admission to Junior Infants, including a template Acceptance of Offer of Admission to Junior Infants.](#)
- [Template letter of “non-offer” of admission to Junior Infants.](#)
- [Template Application Form for Admission to Classes other than Junior Infants.](#)
- [Template Letter of Offer of Admission to Classes other than Junior Infants, including a template Acceptance of Offer of Admission to Classes other than Junior Infants.](#)
- [Template letter of “non-offer” of admission to Classes other than Junior Infants.](#)

Schools should note that decisions in relation to applications must be communicated to parents no later than three weeks after the closing date for applications. Letters of offer must state the date by which offers must be accepted and should always advise that failure to accept the offer within this period may result in the offer being withdrawn.

Reduced School Day Template Plan

Members are reminded that [Circular 0047/2021](#) and the [Guidelines for schools on recording and notification of the use of Reduced School Days](#) come into effect from January 2021. In essence schools have to have the written consent of parents to a reduced school day, which reduction is required to be reviewed after 6 weeks. Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) and NCSE (via the local SENO) need to be informed of any reduced school day in operation. Records of any such reduced day need to be maintained by the school and a copy given to parents. Parents have the right to withdraw consent and are required to be informed of this right.

CPSMA has prepared a [Template](#) record of a Reduced School Day which may be of use to member schools. Please contact our advice line on 01-629 2462 or email info@cpsma.ie if you require assistance or have any queries in relation to reduced school days.

Masks in primary school

The National Public Health Emergency Team has recommended that face masks be worn by pupils in primary schools from third class upwards. This is under discussion currently and CPSMA will advise you of any updates in this regard.



Panel access to the Supplementary Panel for the 2022/2023 school year

[Circular 0057/2021](#) and [Information relating to Circular 0057/2021](#) set out the arrangements for access to the supplementary redeployment panels for the 2022/2023 school year. It is important to note that completed application forms must be received by post only in the Department of Education by 5pm on **Friday 17th December 2021** at the following address:

Supplementary Panel Application, Primary Teacher Allocations Section,
Department of Education, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 X659

Members should bring this Circular and Information relation to Circular 0057/2021 to the attention of relevant staff as soon as possible. The Supplementary Panel Application Form is attached [here](#).

NCCA consultation on the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework

Consultation with primary schools and special schools by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on the [Draft Primary Curriculum Framework](#) has now reopened. In February 2020, the NCCA published the draft framework setting out proposals for a redeveloped primary curriculum. The consultation was originally planned to run from late February to December 2020. However, in response to the challenging circumstances brought about by COVID-19, consultation was postponed with schools in late 2020.

Continuing until the end of February 2022, the NCCA now wishes to hear from and engage directly with teachers, school leaders, children and parents through online focus group events using the Zoom platform. People can register their interest [here](#) to attend one of these events which are approximately one hour in duration. The NCCA have also relaunched an online questionnaire, written submission form and consultation workshop materials for schools which are available [here](#). There will be further updates on the consultation with schools in the weeks and months ahead. You can also view their [information video](#).

MPLC guidance for schools

We have received queries from members relating to MPLC and the requirement of schools to have a licence in place.

Our advice is that if a school shows motion pictures (which includes videos, DVDs, downloads from the internet etc) 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.

However, if a school is showing educational and/or instructional material only, then educational establishments are exempt and no licence is required.

If you have any queries in relation to this matter, please ring us at 01-6292462.





Mí cuimhneacháin is ea Mí na Samhna. Is cuimhin linn go h-airithe na daoine a fuair bás le linn na paindéime COVID-19.

[November Moment – Primary \(English\)](#) [November Moment – Primary \(Gaeilge\)](#)

Circulars

- [0047/2021](#) Guidelines for the use of Reduced School Days in Schools
- [0048/2021](#) Home Tuition Grant Scheme for children without a school place
- [0050/2021](#) The managerial authorities of recognised primary schools, special schools and the chief executives of education and training boards COVID-19 operational supports for the 2021/22 school year
- [0053/2021](#) Revision of Salaries Clerical Officer and Caretakers 78 79 schemes with effect from 1 October 2021
- [0055/2021](#) Revision of Salaries for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) with effect from 1 October 2021
- [0056/2021](#) Revision of Teacher Salaries with effect from 1 October 2021
- [0057/2021](#) Panel access for fixed-term/temporary (this includes substitute) and part-time teachers to the Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2022/23 school year

This [link](#) accesses all Department of Education publications relating to COVID-19.



Employee Assistance Service

Our Employee Assistance Service (EAS) will have two access points, one for education and training board staff and one for teachers and SNAs under the Department of Education.



24/7



**Our EAS is available
24/7, 365 days
a year providing:**

- Counselling
- Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Sign Posting For:

- Legal Information
- Financial Information
- Consumer Information
- Career Guidance
- Life Coaching
- Mediation
- Health Information
- Cancer Support
- Autism Support
- Infertility and Pregnancy Loss
- Elder Care Support
- Parent Support
- International Employee Support

On the initial contact, our case manager will complete a quick assessment when appropriate, our referral to short term counselling will be made.

Accessing the EAS for Teachers & SNAs

Free Phone: 1800 411 057

SMS & WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

Email: eap@spectrum.life

Register for your wellbeing app

Register Link:

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

Organisation code: yV8IU17

Accessing the EAS for All Remaining Staff

Free Phone: 1800 814 243

SMS & WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

Email: eap@spectrum.life

Register for your wellbeing app

Register Link:

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

Organisation code: YQHALfbW