

**Banking of Hours from January until February Mid-term Break (23rd February 2022)
Email from DE Info_COVID19@education.gov.ie to Schools Monday January 10th**

Dear Principal,

While the Department has provided supports to schools to allow them to support their operation during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department also recognises that given the current high case numbers that schools will continue to require additional substitute cover in the period leading up to the mid-term break (to 23rd February 2022) to assist in dealing with absences during this phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. A range of measures to increase the availability of substitutes for schools have been put in place including flexibilities around student teacher availability.

Schools have been asked to make every effort to obtain a substitute for all teacher absences. Schools have been advised that the sequence for covering all teacher absences is as follows:

- Supply panel if the school is part of a supply panel cluster arrangement,
- School's own panel of regular substitutes,
- National substitute service/Subseeker,
- Use of Student teachers – details of the additional flexible arrangements for students on placement to provide substitute cover was outlined,
- Other local arrangements such as the administrative principal/ administrative deputy principal if applicable, or other non-classroom teachers,

It is clear that non-classroom teachers, such as special education teachers and English language teaching supports should only be used as a measure of last resort where it was not possible to secure a substitute teacher through any of the other measures outlined above. This measure was to minimise in particular the disruption to learning for children with additional needs in mainstream classes who accessed additional teaching in their schools. **It does not impact on children with additional needs in special classes (such as classes for children with autism) as it relates to non-classroom special education teachers.**

Given the current level of employee absences across sectors, including the education sector, the Department understands that some schools have on occasion had to use their non-mainstream, non-classroom teachers to maintain in-person education this week. The Department is also conscious that there are numbers of children absent from school at present, either isolating as a result of Covid-19 or as a close contact. In these circumstances the Department is conscious that these children may also have missed an opportunity to get additional support from their SET and is now permitting the banking of SET hours from January until the February mid-term break, in line with all of the additional measures to support schools during this phase of the pandemic.

Schools are reminded to abide by the terms of the recent Information Note on sequencing of substitution so that use of SET is minimised but, where it cannot be avoided, schools will be permitted to bank the hours to ensure that children with additional needs continue to be supported.

Kind regards,

Info_COVID19

PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL

A Phríomhoide, a chara,

Cé go bhfuil tacaíochtaí soláthraithe ag an Roinn do scoileanna chun cuidiú leo an scolaíocht a choinneáil ar siúl le linn na paindéime, tuigeann an Roinn chomh maith go mbeidh gá ag scoileanna le breis clúdach ionadaíochta ó seo go dtí an briseadh lárthearma (23 Feabhra 2022) de bharr an líon mór cásanna chun cabhrú leo deileáil le neamhláithreachtaí le linn na tréimhse seo den phaindéim Cóivid-19. Ta raon bearta, lena n-áirítear solúbthacht maidir le hinfhaighteacht múinteoirí faoi oiliúint, curtha ar fáil chun infhaighteacht ionadaithe do scoileanna a mheadú

Iarradh ar scoileanna gach iarracht a dhéanamh ionadaí a fháil do gach neamhláithreacht múinteoirí. Tá sé curtha in iúl do scoileanna gurb é seo a leanas an t-ord chun gach asláithreacht múinteoirí a chlúdach:

- An painéal soláthair má tá an scoil mar chuid de shocrú um chnuasach painéal soláthair,
- Painéal múinteoirí ionaid rialta na scoile féin,
- An tseirbhís náisiúnta múinteoirí ionaid/Subseeker
- Múinteoirí faoi oiliúint/ábhar múinteoirí – tugadh breac-chuntas ar shonraí na socruithe solúbtha breise do mhic léinn atá ar shocrúchán chun clúdach ionadaíochta a sholáthar
- Socruithe áitiúla eile amhail an príomhoide riaracháin/an príomhoide riaracháin tánaisteach más infheidhme, nó múinteoirí eile nach múinteoirí ranga iad

Tuigtear nár cheart leas a bhaint as múinteoirí nach múinteoirí ranga iad – leithéide múinteoirí riachtanais speisialta agus múinteoirí tacaíochta don Bhéarla – ach sa chás nach féidir teacht ar ionadaí trí mheán aon chenn de na bearta thuas. Tá an beartas seo ann chun laghdú a dhéanamh a mhéid agus is féidir, ar chur isteach ar an bhfoghlaim do leanaí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise acu atá i ranganna príomhshrutha ach a bhfuil teagasc breise á fháil acu ina scoileanna. **Ní bhaineann sé seo le leanaí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise acu i ranganna speisialta (ranganna do leanaí a bhfuil uathachas orthu, mar shampla) mar baineann sé le múinteoirí oideachais speisialta nach bhfuil sa seomra ranga.**

Ag cur san áireamh an leibhéal reatha d'asláithreachtaí fostaithe ar fud earnálacha, lena n-áirítear an earnáil oideachais, tuigeann an Roinn go raibh ar roinnt scoileanna ó am go chéile, úsáid a bhaint as a gcuid múinteoirí neamhphríomhshrutha, nach múinteoirí ranga iad chun oideachas i bpearsan a choinneáil ar siúl an tseachtain seo. Tuigeann an Roinn freisin go bhfuil líon mór leanaí as láthair ón scoil faoi láthair, ag féin-aonrú mar thoradh ar Covid-19 nó mar thoradh ar dhlúth-theagmháil. Sna cúinsí seo tuigeann an Roinn go bhféadfadh deis a bheith cailte ag na leanaí seo chun tacaíocht bhreise a fháil óna múinteoir oideachais speisialta agus tá sí anois ag ceadú uaireanta oideachais speisialta (SET) a chur sa bhanc ó Eanáir go dtí an sos lárthearma I bhFeabhra, ag teacht leis na bearta breise ar fad atá ann chun tacú le scoileanna le linn na tréimhse seo den phaindéim.

Meabhraítear do scoileanna cloí le téarmaí an Nóta Faisnéise is déanaí maidir le seicheamhú ionadaíochta ionas go maolófar ar úsáid an mhúinteora oideachais speisialta ach, nuair nach féidir é a sheachaint, ceadófar do scoileanna na huaireanta a chur i mbanc lena chinntiú go bhfaighidh páistí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise acu an tacaíocht atá ag dul dóibh.

Le gach dea-ghuí

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