



Newsletter

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Dear Principals and Chairpersons,

Lifting of Restrictions: The restrictions have now been lifted in schools and [Information Note SD 0003/2022](#) sets out clearly the main changes to school life going forward. Schools can now begin to return to pre pandemic practices and procedures in many ways, while continuing the enhanced cleaning measures introduced in schools during COVID. The Department is reviewing the COVID-19 Response Plan and will advise schools shortly in this regard. Schools should be aware of the latest [Public Health Advice](#) for COVID-19. There will no doubt be some concerns remaining, in view of the high numbers of COVID-19 cases in schools. Hopefully, this next phase, which permits pods and bubbles to mix, will bring some joy to our pupils.

Bank Holiday: [Circular 0008/2022](#) brings the welcome news of an additional bank holiday, reducing the number of school days to 182 per year, beginning this year. If you haven't planned an additional school holiday this year, you can do so now.

Special Education Teachers: CPSMA is aware of the concerns of schools in relation to any proposed changes to allocations of Special Education Teachers. Given the massive disruption which schools have experienced since last September, we do not believe that any schools should lose resources at this critical time. We will be making representations that what is needed is not an updated profiling of schools, but instead that all schools retain their current levels of support and that provision be made to increase supports for new and developing schools. This is not the time to remove critical supports from the children in our schools.

Reconnecting with Parents: CPSMA have just delivered a [webinar](#) on "Reconnecting with parents – meeting the challenges and reaping the rewards", together with an accompanying Podcast and Resource Sheet which are available to members on our website

Coiste na Gaeilge: Tá Coiste na Gaeilge curtha ar bun ag Cumann Bainistíochta na mBunscoileanna Caitliceacha. Beidh sé mar chuspóir ag an gCoiste féachaint ar an seirbhís agus ar an tacaíocht atá á sholáthar ag Cumann Bainistíochta na mBunscoileanna Caitliceacha do na Gaelscoileanna agus scoileanna na Gaeltachta.

Pope Francis has asked us all to remember Ukraine this Ash Wednesday, with prayer and fasting for peace and as we enter this next phase of school life, I know that our hearts and prayers are with Ukrainians all over the world at this difficult time and especially with the Ukrainian children and families in our school communities.

Seamus Mulcahy



Non Statutory Leave Deadlines

[Circular 0054/2019](#) outlines the Career Break (Chapter 7), Job-Share (Chapter 8) and Temporary Reassignment Scheme (Chapter 9) for teachers. This circular outlines the eligibility and application process for each scheme with the relevant application forms at the end of each chapter.

Application deadlines for the submission of applications were 1st February 2022, with boards to issue their response to Career Break and Job Share applications to the teachers involved by March 1st 2022 and April 1st 2022 for Teacher Temporary Reassignment.

Each section initially outlines the relevant eligibility criteria for the different leave schemes. The timelines, restrictions, pay, recording and application processes are clearly described.

[Circular 0022/2012](#) outlines the Career Break Scheme for Special Needs Assistants. [Circular 0041/2014](#) applies to Job Share Arrangements for SNAs. The closing date for these applications is March 1st, with boards to respond before March 31st annually.

The decision to grant or refuse these non-statutory leave types rests with the board. In assessing staff leave applications, boards have to consider the impact on teaching and learning in the school. While each application must be appraised on its own merits, it must be viewed in the context of the impact on the welfare and educational needs of students.

Where leave is not given, a written reason for the refusal must be given before the required date. However, in general boards approach applications for leave positively, seeking to address the needs and expectations of staff, in balance with the requirements of the school.

If further help or advice on leave applications is required, please do not hesitate to contact our advice line on 01-6292462, or email us on info@cpsma.ie.



Parental Leave

Parental Leave is a statutory leave entitlement allowing a teacher ([Circular 0054/2019](#)) or SNA ([Circular 0027/2013](#)) a period of unpaid leave to care for his/her child. A total of 26 weeks leave is permitted in respect of each child, up to the age of 13 years, or 16 years in the case of a child with a disability and/or long term illness. The leave is available to a natural, adoptive or adopting parent or a staff member acting in loco parentis to a child.

Parental Leave is normally taken in one week blocks i.e. seven consecutive days. A staff member may take a number of weeks in a given school year and take further Parental Leave in other years, to a total of 26 weeks per child. It should be noted that [Information Note TC 0003/2022](#) extends the additional flexible arrangements in relation to parental leave, which had been brought in during the pandemic, until the end of this current school year.

It is noteworthy that individual days may be approved by the board of management where a child has particular medical problems that require the attendance of a parent with the child to a hospital, clinic or therapeutic appointment on a regular basis.

Applications for Parental Leave should normally be made to the board of management at least six weeks before the commencement of the leave but additional flexibilities in this regard are available in accordance with [Information Note TC 0003/2022](#). The appropriate application forms are available in the relevant Circulars – Teachers Chapter 5, [Circular 0054/2019](#) and SNA's in [Circular 0027/2013](#).

As this is a statutory leave entitlement, a board should confirm the applicants eligibility with receipt of the child's birth certificate or evidence of the date of adoption or evidence that the staff member is acting in loco parentis.

The application will state the blocks of leave being requested.

As a statutory leave entitlement, provided a staff member is eligible, a board must grant the leave.

However, a board may postpone the leave once to a later date (not later than six months away), on the basis that granting the leave at a particular time would have a substantial adverse effect on the operation of the school. It is important to note that this is a postponement and not a refusal to grant the leave.

The process of communicating the board's decision to the applicant is outlined in each circular.

Grants Calendar for remainder of 2021/2022 school year

January 2022	1. Capitation Grant (1st moiety)
	2. Covid Capitation for Additional Cleaning Grant (2nd Instalment)
	3. Covid Capitation for PPE Grant (2nd Instalment)
March 2022	1. Ancillary Services Grant
April 2022	1. Standardised Testing Grant
	2. School Book Grant
June 2022	1. Capitation Grant (2nd moiety)
	2. DEIS Grant



Recruitment

The Staffing Circular is not expected until late March this year at the earliest. This is the document which states the number of staff to be allocated to schools and lays down the various categories of appeal which may be taken by schools. Timelines are given for submission of documents to the Department of Education relating to CIDs, panels etc. We will deal with these matters in our next Newsletter, which will issue when the Staffing Circular has been released.

In the meantime, recruitment may of course continue, in the event of a vacancy arising in the position of principal, deputy principal or assistant principal. [Circular 0044/2019](#) governs the recruitment of these positions, which has been updated by [Circular 0025/2021](#) in respect of the number of Assistant Principal Posts allowed in a school.

In the case of the Deputy Principal being appointed, it is important to check that there is a vacancy for a teacher in the school. If not, a school cannot recruit externally for a Deputy Principal. If a vacancy does exist in the school, then Chapter 4 of 0044/2019 needs to be consulted as to whether the school is required to recruit externally. This will depend on the size of the school. If the school is required to recruit externally, the provisions of Chapter 4 of 0044/2019 will govern the recruitment process. This process is similar for a Principal and Deputy Principal.

If there is no vacancy for a teacher in the school, or if the school is not required to recruit externally, then Chapter 3 of 0044/2019 should be consulted in relation to an internal leadership and management appointment. This process is similar for a Deputy Principal and an Assistant Principal. Strict compliance with the procedures and timelines set out in Chapter 3 is essential to ensure a successful process. The process begins with the requirement to consult with staff in relation to the needs of the school, in advance of determination of the duties of the postholder in question. These duties, when finalised, will require to be signed off by the board, in advance of the post being advertised.

CPSMA has a checklist for leadership and management posts, template advertisement and suggested contracts for use by schools and these are available under the [Leadership and Management](#) heading of the Appointments section of our website.



Child Protection Update

General

The [Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools 2017](#) set out the specific child protection requirements that apply to all schools and boards of management.

The Inspectorate has advised that incidental inspections have recommenced since January 2022 and Child Protection Level 1 inspections are continuing to take place.

New Mandatory Template 1

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 since January 2022, this new 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 are not a requirement in each school's risk assessment. The Inspectorate wishes to see evidence that each school has considered its own particular risks and has inserted mitigation measures appropriate to those risks, in its Child Protection Statement.

Name of Designated Liaison Person

A common area of concern relates to the requirement to change the name of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in the CSS and in school notices 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 the board to amend the name of the DLP in the CSS and in the notices at the entrance to the school.

Training

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 for members.



Review of CSS

Member schools will note the following two questions appearing as questions 35 and 36 of the [Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement \(Mandatory Template 2\)](#)

35. Has the Board sought the feedback of parents in relation to the school's compliance with the requirements of the child safeguarding requirements of the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017'?
36. Has the Board sought the feedback of pupils in relation to the school's child safeguarding arrangements?

There are a number of ways that a school can deal with the first question (Q. 35), including requesting feedback or comments from parents by email. However, schools seeking to survey a group of parents, or all parents, may wish to consider asking them some of the following types of questions:

*Have you any concerns about the safety of children at our school? or
Do you think that the children are safe and well protected at school?*

*Is there any aspect of the school environment that you feel is unsafe? or
Do you think that the school is complying with its Child safeguarding requirements?*

*What steps would you suggest the school takes to ensure the children's safety? or
Have you any suggestions as to how the school could improve its child protection procedures?*

In relation to the second question (Q.36), schools may deal with this topic during an SPHE lesson with senior classes and/or may consider asking the children some of the following questions and noting their responses or asking them to fill in a questionnaire (no children's names should be recorded) containing some of the following types of questions:

*I feel safe in school.. YES/NO
I feel safe on yard YES/NO
I know who to tell if I don't feel safe in school ... YES/NO
I know who to tell if I don't feel safe on yard ... YES/NO
What makes you feel safe in school ?
How could we help you feel safer in school ?*

If you wish to discuss any suggestions you may have relating to these issues or indeed any child protection issues, please contact us on 01-6292462 to talk to one of our advisors.

NCSE Guidelines for Special Schools and Mainstream Schools 2022/23

Guidelines for Principals and Boards of Management of Special Schools for 2022/2023 were published by the NCSE on 13th January 2022. Click [here](#) for details.

Guidelines for Principals and Boards of Management of Mainstream Schools for 2022/2023 were published by the NCSE on 13th January 2022. Click [here](#) for details.



COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay for teachers and SNAs

The Department of Education as directed by the Department of Expenditure and Public Reform (DPER) has released Information Notes [TC 0001/2022](#) and [TC 0002/2022](#) on COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay.

These changes are to take account of the recent changes to self-isolation period requirements in line with current public health advice. Points to note in particular are as follows:

- COVID-19 Leave with Pay remains available for someone who displays COVID-19 symptoms, receives a positive PCR test or receives a positive antigen test result (where acceptable).
- COVID-19 Leave with Pay is now set at a maximum of 10 days (was 28 days previously).
- Where the employee is medically unfit for work after the 10 day period, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave Scheme will apply. New changes take effect from 7th February 2022.
- For an employee who commenced COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay prior to 7th February 2022, the maximum limit of 28 days still applies.

NOTE: [Information Note SD 0003/2022](#) has just been released in relation to the new regime in schools and accordingly here may be further changes to the above Information Notes in due course.

Primary Curriculum Framework

The NCCA is currently reviewing the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework. The document is intended to encourage and support discussion and debate about a redeveloped curriculum for primary schools. It will inform and guide the NCCA's development of a specification for each curriculum area—Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, Social and Environmental Education, Wellbeing, and Arts Education.

Aistear Framework

The NCCA is holding a consultation process to update the Aistear framework. Although no major changes are anticipated, the original framework is now 12 years old and many policy and social changes have occurred in the interim period. Some background information, as well as feedback mechanisms for schools, staff, parents and education related organisations are available [here](#).

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Implementation Plan

The Department of Education is developing a new Implementation Plan 2022-2026, to implement the STEM Education policy statement. It aims to gather information on STEM implementation to date and identify actions under each of the 4 pillars; namely nurturing learner engagement and participation, enhancing early years practitioner and teacher capacity, supporting STEM education practice and using evidence to support STEM education. You can read the **CPSMA submission** [here](#).



Genesis Survey

CPSMA contracted an external consulting firm, Genesis, to conduct market research in order to obtain an up-to-date and comprehensive picture of the public perception of Catholic schools and the factors determining choice of Catholic schools. A key element of the project was a national representative survey of 500 parents of school-going children, conducted in April 2019. The results were very positive and are a tribute to the hard work and commitment of all who teach, work in and lead our schools and to the voluntary boards of management who support that vital work.

School satisfaction

Overall, there is a high level of satisfaction among parents of primary school-going children with the quality of education being delivered in our schools. 78% of parents reported being either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the school their child was attending, with no major difference in satisfaction ratings across regional or socio-economic lines.

School choice

72% of parents felt they had a choice of schools to pick from and that they sent their child to the school of their choice. 24% felt that they sent their child to the only school that was available in the area and only 4% felt they did not get their first preference school of choice.

The role of the Church in education

There is overwhelming support reported among parents (78%) in the 2019 Genesis survey for the Catholic Church to have a role in continuing to shape and influence ethos in education. 9% of parents reported that the Church should have a “much more active role” and 33% thought they Church should have “some role” in the ethos of their local school “equal to that of other community members, such as parents, principals and teachers”. 22% of parents indicated that the Church should have no role in the ethos of their local school.

The holistic development of the pupil

It is clear that Irish parents prize highly the holistic development of their children. Parents cited a focus on respect, community, and faith formation as the three leading advantages of Catholic schools.

Additionally, 20% of parents thought that Catholic schools had an advantage due to their “inclusion of students from all backgrounds”.

The positive results of the research are a welcome recognition by these parents of the work and commitment of everyone in our schools.

Guidance Manual for Treasurers

The FSSU have recently issued [Guidance Manual for the Treasurer of a Board of Management in a recognised Primary School](#) which should be of assistance to your treasurer in carrying out their role on the board.



Spectrum.Life Employee Assistance Service (EAS) FAQs

Spectrum.Life are the current EAS providers to the Department of Education. They have provided us with the following information on the service they provide.

What is EAS?

Our Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is a 24/7 free and confidential support service designed to assist individuals in dealing more effectively with any personal or work-related problems they might be facing. Where appropriate, our EAS provides up to 6 sessions of short-term, solution focused counselling and referral services, per issue, per year.

Who in my family can use this service?

The service can be used by a spouse, civil partner or dependants where the family member can be described as over the age of 18 and residing in the family home.

What kind of support does this service provide?

We offer access through a dedicated telephone helpline (**1800 411 057**), available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Employees can also reach the service through our wellbeing app/platform via a live chat function, and a request a call back function. Therefore, we can respond to your needs at any time, no matter where you are.

Is the number a Freephone number?

Yes, the number is free phone and open 24/7. The freephone number is **1800 411 057**. Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010 to avail of EAS support on SMS & WhatsApp (standard rates apply).

Who will answer the EAS calls?

All calls will be answered by our EAS team and all cases will be handled by one of our experienced Case Managers (all fully trained and qualified counsellors), who will carry out an assessment with each caller to ensure that each person is receiving the specialised assistance that they need.

What if the line is busy when an employee calls and they cannot speak with a counsellor?

We have put in place stringent measures to make sure that the line is never busy. However, if for some reason we do miss a call and on a very rare occasion you may leave a voice mail, to allow us to call you back as soon as possible.

Will there be more online services?

Yes. We have a whole host of online services, including a Digital Gym! Go to our [portal](#), where we have extensive educational resources such as videos, blogs and eLearning on topics like mental health, self-care, fitness, nutrition and more. We also have live chat and video counselling available through the portal which will provide access to regularly updated blogs and info on our EAS, while also giving you the option to instantly call the helpline.



Do I need a special code or my name to access the EAS service?

No, all we may require on the initial contact is confirmation of your school and role type. We will also ask some high-level information. The high level information will be your name, date of birth and contact details. This will enable us to maintain our clinical standards/clinical governance.

If it doesn't suit for me to meet the counsellor face to face, are there any other options for me?

Yes, you can request video or telephone counselling, whatever suits you best.

How many sessions of counselling am I entitled to?

On the initial contact, the Case Manager will collect a person's contact details, discuss the issue they are facing and complete a quick assessment, taking approximately 30 minutes. This is also known as a triage process.

Where appropriate, person may be referred to short term counselling through the EAS following the triage process with the Case Manager. When a person is referred to counselling through the EAS, they will be provided with up to 6 sessions of counselling, where appropriate.

What do you mean by short term counselling?

EAS only provides short-term counselling. In short-term counselling it is understood that major long-term psychological issues and behaviours are unlikely to be resolved and changed quickly. If an individual has issues that are identified as requiring long term counselling, they may not be suitable for the EAS. In these cases, we can provide employees with options for getting their psychological needs met in a more appropriate, longer-term setting where they can explore their issues in more depth and begin to change long-term patterns of behaviour.

If you have any questions on that, our EAS team can help you.

Are there many counsellors in my county?

We have an extensive large network of qualified professional EAS counsellors & psychotherapists spread across the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland. We offer employees face to face counselling in a mutually agreeable venue within a 30km radius of their home or workplace, where possible due to COVID19 restrictions, at mutually agreed times. The face to face counselling appointment will be confirmed with the employee within 24 hours and scheduled within 5 days from the date of initial contact.

How can I be sure my employer won't know I called?

All services provided through the Spectrum.Life EAS are done so in total confidence. The identity of individuals and personal details will always be protected by the Case Managers and our team of counsellors. This information will never be shared with or reported to the employer or anyone else, without the employee's clear consent.

Can I call the EAS if I want more information on the service?

Yes, the EAS service is there to answer any questions you may have. No question is too big or small so feel free to reach out to the team 24/7, 365 days of the year.



Seminars for Students

CPSMA is delighted to be in a position to offer seminars to final year students on preparing for the upcoming recruitment process for primary and special school teaching positions. The seminars have been well received in previous years and have been facilitated online and in person. This year also includes an opportunity to thank students directly for their service in our schools in a substitute capacity since Christmas and also to thank the Higher Education Institutes for facilitating this arrangement to assist schools with staffing shortages arising from COVID-19.

SEAI Energy Update – Spring 2022

Monitoring and Reporting

Schools can login to SEAI's online system to report annual energy consumption and related data for 2021. **The deadline for submitting energy usage and related data is 8th April 2022.** SEAI is conscious of the impact of Covid-19 and of the significant challenges this has presented for schools. To assist you in completing your report SEAI have made [a range of supports and resources available](#).

SEAI are holding training workshops online via Zoom and this year there will be a new option of a shorter refresher workshop as well as training for new users.

Book a workshop place [here](#).

M&R New User Training	Duration	Content
Tuesday 8th March 2022	9:30am – 12:00pm	- About the M&R system - How to complete your M&R report - Q&A
M&R Refresher Training	Duration	Content
Tuesday 8th March 2022	2:00pm – 3:30pm	- How to complete your M&R report
Wednesday 30th March 2022	2:00pm – 3:30pm	- Q&A

Monitoring and Reporting helpdesk: mandr@seai.ie or 01 808 2012

Top Energy Tips

When schools are closing for midterm or Easter holidays it is important to completely switch off as much energy consuming equipment as is practical to save money and save energy. [Read more](#).

For more tips on how to save your school energy and money visit www.energyineducation.ie.

For teaching resources and workshops for pupils visit www.seai.ie/teaching-sustainability.

Sign up to SEAI's schools ezine [here](#) and keep up to date on new resources and supports for teaching energy and sustainability in school.



Recent Circulars and Information Notes

Circulars

- [0009/2022](#) Revision of Salaries for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) with effect from 1 February 2022
- [0008/2022](#) New Public Holiday from 2022
- [0006/2022](#) Revision of salaries with effect from 1 February 2022 for Clerical Officers and Caretakers employed in National Schools under the 1978/79 Scheme and Clerical Officers employed in Post Primary Schools under the 1978 Scheme
- [0003/2022](#) Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Special Education Teachers, 2022/2023
- [0002/2022](#) Graduate Certificate in the Education of Pupils on the Autism Spectrum (AS) for teachers working with Pupils on the AS in Special Schools, Special Classes or as Special Education Teachers in mainstream Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2022/2023
- [0001/2022](#) Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2021
- [0065/2021](#) Enhanced Minor Works Grant Funding for Primary Schools, Exceptional Minor Works Grant Funding for Post-Primary Schools with a particular focus on supporting enhanced ventilation
- [0063/2021](#) Final closing date of 30 April 2022 for receipt of eligible qualification allowance applications (as a Result of the Findings of the Adjudicator under Claim 447/19)
- [0060/2021](#) Grant Scheme for EU NRRP Funding to schools to address the digital divide, and learners at risk of educational disadvantage
- [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

Information Notes

- [TC 0001/2022](#) COVID-19: Updated Working and Leave Arrangements from January 2022 for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools.
- [TC 0002/2022](#) COVID-19: Changes to Special Leave with Pay from 7th February 2022 for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools.
- [TC 0003/2022](#) COVID-19: Parental Leave Scheme – Arrangements for remainder of 2021/22 school year for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools.
- [SD 0003/2022](#) Updated Covid-19 Guidance to Schools following the mid-term break 2022

Lá Fhéile Pádraig faoi mhaise daoibh go léir

