



# Newsletter

No. 75 December 2023

## Away in a manger

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**CPSMA wishes all Chairpersons,  
board members, principals,  
teachers and staff a happy  
Christmas  
and New Year.**

**Our office will close on Friday  
22nd December and will re-open  
on Monday 8th January 2024.**

**We look forward to working  
with you in 2024.**

### Dear Members

St. Francis of Assisi, set up a Christmas nativity scene in the village of Greccio close to the Italian city of Reiti, in December 1223. Eight hundred years later, all over the country, in our homes, schools, workplaces, churches and outdoor venues, cribs are taken out of safe storage for the Christmas season. This tradition remains as an essential part of Christmas for many people..

The Crib is a symbol of the events in Bethlehem two thousand years ago and represents the diversity of the human condition then and now. It symbolises family, love, homelessness, exile, fear, faith, welcome, rejection, wealth, poverty, status, race, the natural world, the human and the divine.

This year, the eighth hundredth anniversary of St Francis's nativity scene, provides an opportunity for reflection on and celebration of the tradition of the Crib. We invite you to use the short video, [The Crib – 800 years](#), in your schools as you all prepare for this Christmas.

O come, let us adore Him.

I wish you a happy and a holy Christmas and hope that there is some time for rest and renewal in this season of joy.

*Seamus Mulcahy*



**Nollaig shona agus athbhliain faoi shéan is faoi mhaise  
daoibh go léir ó CPSMA**

## New Board Term – Checklist for Chairpersons

As the new term for boards of management commenced on 1st December 2023, the following is a suggested checklist for chairpersons at this time.



1. All board members are required to sign Form 2 (Declaration of Acceptance of Membership of the School Board of Management) which is contained on page 82 of the [Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2023–2027](#) . The completed form should be retained with the board minutes.



2. The chairperson should remind board members at the start of all meetings that everything discussed at meetings of the board must remain confidential, unless otherwise agreed by the board.



3. The board should elect a treasurer from amongst its members. Neither the chairperson, the principal, nor the teacher nominee are eligible to be appointed as treasurer.



4. The principal may be the secretary to the board but, if not, the board should elect a Recording Secretary from amongst its members.



5. The chairperson should explain to board members at the start of each meeting that if a potential conflict of interest arises in relation to any issue being discussed at a board meeting, they should speak to the chairperson who will advise them on the next steps.



6. The chairperson and principal should meet in advance of each board meeting to discuss, finalise and send out the agenda to board members.



7. Boards are required to meet a minimum of 5 times per year and at least once a term. It might be possible to set dates for the first few meetings so that board members can plan ahead. In any event, the date of the next meeting should generally be agreed in advance. Seven days' notice is required for members except for an emergency meeting.



8. At the end of each board meeting, the board should prepare an "agreed report" of the meeting, which is really a synopsis of the meeting for circulation to staff and parents. This should not include details of any confidential matters.



9. The chairperson should remind members at each meeting that the agreed report is the only way in which board members can communicate with the school community about what happens at board meetings This obligation to maintain confidentiality respects the trust placed in board members by those who elected them to carry out their responsibilities with discretion and absolute confidentiality.



10. Each school is required to register with the Charities Regulator and has to verify the information provided to the Regulator each year. Board members are required to provide details of their names, residential addresses and the date on which they commenced as board members. Addresses will not be made public on the Charities Register.

*CPSMA wishes all board members well in their work for their local schools and thanks them for taking on this role.*



# Board of Management Training 2024

Training for chairpersons with principals has taken place in many Dioceses and will continue into the first quarter of 2024. Please check with your local Diocesan Education Office for the arrangements for your Diocese.

CPSMA will be rolling out training for members of boards of management. This will be arranged in the Spring and schools will be contacted well in advance in relation to bookings for board members

In the meantime, CPSMA has prepared a short [video](#) of introduction to CPSMA for chairpersons and a short [podcast](#) for board members in relation to board meetings. It might be helpful to circulate these to chairpersons and board members in due course.

Schools have been enquiring about the Governance Manual for Boards of Management 2023-2027 and CPSMA has been advised that this will be available shortly in schools.

In addition to the [Governance Manual](#), CPSMA has produced a Guidebook for Chairpersons 2023 (as Béarla agus Gaeilge) which has been provided to chairpersons at the training evenings. It will be available for chairpersons at the board training and will be online early in the New Year.

Please visit the Board of Management section of our website [www.cpsma.ie](http://www.cpsma.ie) where chairpersons and principals can access information and guidance for themselves and their board members.

## Parental Complaints Procedure

CPSMA has engaged extensively with INTO and the primary management bodies in revising the existing nationally agreed parental complaints procedure.

[The revised parental complaints procedure](#) is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner, with a view to seeking an early resolution of the issue.

The revised procedures take effect from 1st January 2024.

Tá leagan Gaeilge ar fáil [anseo](#).



## SNA Workforce Development Plan

The Department of Education established a dedicated SNA Workforce Development Unit within its Special Education Section in order to ensure that sufficient time and attention is given to examination of the special needs assistant role and any reform or development required.

The SNA Workforce Plan is now being developed in consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and it is envisaged that the key areas that the plan will address are:

- Review and Development of the SNA role
- Establishment of a Quality Assurance Framework
- Establishment of a SNA Learning and Development Programme
- Supporting SNA Recruitment, Retention and Diversity
- Development of a Communications Strategy to ensure optimum communication and collaboration with all stakeholders to achieve the vision of the SNA Workforce Development Plan.

CPSMA and the other Primary Management bodies will be consulting closely with the Department and other stakeholders in relation to this plan .

## Department of Education Survey on Substitution

The Department of Education (Teacher Education Policy Section) has been undertaking a survey on substitution. The purpose of this survey is to help the Department understand patterns of working across substitute teachers in the primary and post-primary sectors in Ireland.

They are inviting anyone who has provided substitute work in the last school year or the current school year to respond. The information gathered will be used for statistical purposes only and will be presented in aggregate in the form of a report. All submissions will be anonymous.

The survey is on esinet but unfortunately it has had limited success reaching subs. The survey is available [here](#) and/or use embedded QR code in the infographic below. The Department have asked for assistance in promoting substitute teacher participation in the survey which closes at the end of this month. CPSMA appreciates the real difficulties experienced by schools locating substitute teachers.

**Survey of Substitute Teachers**  
Share your experiences with us!

**What are we doing?** The Statistics Unit in the Department are running a survey using the EU Survey platform in order to help the Department understand the experiences of substitute teachers

**Why are we doing it?** We want to establish what are the barriers, challenges and decisions around providing substitution work in the Education system

**Who are we after?** Anyone who worked as a substitute teacher in the last school year, either for a day, or multiple days, at either Primary or Post Primary level

**How can you share your experience?** **Please take part in the survey**, it will be open at the end of Summer, and will close at the end of December 2023 - responses are all anonymous and it should take no more than 10 minutes to complete



## Education for Sustainable Development News

### Sustainability Toolkit for Schools Launched

[The School Sector – Climate Action Mandate](#) was published on 14 March 2023.

One of the objectives in the Mandate is that schools would adopt a **Sustainability Policy Statement**. A working group was established by the Department to develop templates and guidelines to support schools in adopting their statement. These documents are now available on the ESD to 2030 webpage including:

- A self-assessment audit to help schools identify their strengths and weaknesses in terms of Sustainable Development
- A Sustainability Guidelines document
- A Sustainability Policy Statement template

We hope these documents will assist schools in drafting their Sustainability Policy Statements and that schools will publish the statement on their websites. The toolkit is available at [here](#).

### ESD to 2030 – Funding for Schools 2023

ESD to 2030 funding for schools has recently been issued. Circa. €550,000 has been awarded to 130 schools to support ESD related projects. [A list of grantees is available](#) on the ESD to 2030 webpage.

### ESD to 2030 – Funding for Organisations Awarded

[A funding call](#) for organisations and projects supporting the implementation of ESD to 2030 in schools was made in the May ESD Newsletter and funding of just over €267,000 has now been awarded.

### Teacher CPD Inventory for ESD

In March 2023, the Department commissioned a mapping exercise in order to identify the available ESD related CPD that is available for primary and post-primary teachers. [The inventory of CPD](#) is now available on the ESD to 2030 webpage. The list will be updated regularly as new CPD opportunities become available.

### ESD Newsletter

Did you know that the Department publishes a quarterly ESD Newsletter? For past issues, see [Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter](#). If you have an article you wish to see included in future issues, please get in touch at [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie)

### Sustainable Development Goals Poster

The Department issued two copies of a poster of the **17 Sustainable Development Goals** to all schools last year, as well as a flyer with information on Ireland's new **National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development: ESD to 2030**, with details of how to access resources for schools.

Should you require additional copies of either the poster or flyer, please email [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie).





# Catholic Schools Week 21st-27th January 2024

## Catholic Schools Week 2024 – Communities of Service

Catholic Schools will take place from **Sunday 21st to Saturday 27th January 2024** on the theme of Catholic Schools as Communities of Service.

Christian service puts faith into action. In Catholic schools, as we study and look to Jesus Christ as our role model and Teacher, we come to a greater understanding of the depth of Christian service. Jesus served every person regardless of creed, background, faith, social status or age. He put faith into action by showing all those around him how our Heavenly Father is compassionate, courageous and forgiving. Jesus didn't just talk about His faith; He lived it.

We are called by faith to go into the world to share the love of God with all those we meet. Each person, at every age, is called to become Christ for another by serving every person with a humble heart and with a generous spirit.

For Catholic Schools Week, we will contemplate our schools as communities of service under the following themes:

- Service in Our Community of Friends
- Service in Our School Community
- Service in Our Family Community
- Service in Our Local Community
- Service in Our Faith Community

The resources will reflect on these features within the overarching theme and will make use of scriptural reflection on prayer, action, student voice, and concern for our common home.

## Resources for primary schools and for parishes

Primary classroom resources		Prayer & Parish resources	
Junior and Senior Infant resources		Catholic Schools Week in your parish	
<a href="#">Gaeilge</a>	<a href="#">English</a>	<a href="#">Gaeilge</a>	<a href="#">English</a>
1st and 2nd Class resources		Prayer Service for Grandparents' Day	
<a href="#">Gaeilge</a>	<a href="#">English</a>	<a href="#">Gaeilge</a>	<a href="#">English</a>
3rd and 4th Class resources		Prayer Service for School Assemblies	
<a href="#">Gaeilge</a>	<a href="#">English</a>	<a href="#">Gaeilge</a>	<a href="#">English</a>
5th and 6th Class resources			
<a href="#">Gaeilge</a>	<a href="#">English</a>		



## Domestic Violence Leave

Domestic Violence Leave can be availed of by a teacher/SNA who is a victim of domestic violence or where a teacher/SNA is providing support to a relevant person. Domestic Violence Leave is a period of paid leave and consists of one or more school days, but must not exceed a maximum of 5 school days in a consecutive 12 month period.

### Teachers

For further information on Domestic Violence Leave for teachers, please refer to [Circular 0059/2023](#). A teacher who avails of Domestic Violence Leave is required to complete the Application Form at Appendix A of Circular 0059/2023. The Application Form should be completed and submitted to the employer, as soon as is reasonably practicable prior to or after availing of such leave.

### SNAs

For further information on Domestic Violence Leave for SNAs, please refer to [Circular 0060/2023](#). An SNA who avails of Domestic Violence Leave is required to complete the Application Form at Appendix A of Circular 0060/2023. The Application Form should be completed and submitted to the employer, as soon as is reasonably practicable prior to or after availing of such leave.

## School buildings or lands

Boards of management should be aware that where issues arise in relation to school lands or buildings, the school Patron/Trustee should be contacted via it's Diocesan Education Office for advice, guidance or consent as required. If you have any queries in this regard, you can call our Education Advisers on 01-6292462 or email us at [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie).

## Recent Circulars

- [0046/2023](#) Revision of Salaries of for school secretaries previously funded under Ancillary grant funding
- [0052/2023](#) Breastfeeding Breaks for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools
- [0053/2023](#) Breastfeeding Breaks for Special Needs Assistants employed In Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools
- [0056/2023](#) Cost of living measure to support increased school running costs
- [0057/2023](#) Panel access for fixed-term/temporary (this includes substitute) and part-time teachers to the Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2024/25 school year
- [0058/2023](#) Force Majeure Leave and Illness in Family Leave for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools
- [0059/2023](#) Domestic Violence Leave for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools
- [0060/2023](#) Domestic Violence Leave for Special Needs Assistants employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools



# Employee Assistance Service

The Employee Assistance Service is a free and confidential service that provides wellbeing support to teachers, SNAs and all school staff. This service is provided by Spectrum. Life.

Your Employee Assistance Service is available **24/7, 365 days a year, providing\***:

- ✓ Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- ✓ 'In The Moment' Support
- ✓ Referral to Counselling



Scan the QR Code  
to head to our app



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

## Register for your wellbeing app:

<https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login> | Organisation code: y|VIIU17

### SMS

Text 'Hi' to 087 145 2056

### WhatsApp

Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

### Freephone IRE

1800 411 057