



Newsletter

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Please photocopy and distribute to members of the Board of Management (**BoM**). A copy has been sent to the Principal. This Newsletter is also available on the CPSMA website at www.cpsma.ie

SECTION 30 TEACHING COUNCIL ACT, 2001

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 will be commenced on **1st November 2013**. From that date, all teaching staff will be required to be registered with the Teaching Council in order to be paid. The Department of Education & Skills (DES) will be prohibited by law from paying unregistered people employed in teaching positions in schools except in very exceptional circumstances and for very short time periods.

The **Board of Management** should notify all teaching staff of the requirement to be registered with the Teaching Council and advise them to apply **immediately** for registration if not already registered.

Delays to registration can occur for any/all of the following reasons or other reasons:

- Locating and providing examination results / transcripts to the Teaching Council where a teacher has not previously done so
- Where the Teaching Council is required to return to the applicant an incorrectly completed registration application form
- Where the Teaching Council is required to return an incorrectly completed Garda Vetting application form to the applicant
- Internal delays with the Garda vetting/police disclosure process which can run to several months in individual cases

PRIMARY SCHOOL PATRONAGE SURVEYS

The Minister for Education and Skills recently published the results of primary school patronage surveys. In all 43 areas were surveyed.

CPSMA welcomes the very important endorsement of Catholic primary education. The results of the surveys are also welcomed by the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) which has noted that it is the first time that a measure of the number of parents who would avail of greater choice of school patronage has been established. CSP also point out that it is important that any proposals for change are based on accurate measurements of parental preferences.

The Minister for Education and Skills requested that Catholic Patrons give consideration to a reconfiguration of schools in 28 areas. Catholic Bishops have made clear their openness to greater diversity of school provision based on verifiable parental demand. CSP has made the following proposals:

1. In response to the Minister's request it is necessary to put in place a structure of engagement between the DES and the Patrons' representatives. As consultations in local areas continue, it becomes clear that the practical problems differ from one place to another. Engagement between the DES and Patrons will be important in attempting to formulate creative responses to complex situations. In all of this it is imperative to reassure local communities that no change will be implemented without widespread support in the area.
2. CSP will continue to roll out a *Process for understanding, supporting and taking ownership of the characteristic spirit in a Catholic school*. This will help schools to reflect on their core identity and to develop their sense of Catholic mission in today's world. In some cases it may lead to schools being open to a change in patronage as it becomes clear to all involved that Catholic identity is not central to the characteristic spirit of the particular school. In this instance change is not imposed from outside but is allowed to express itself from within the school community.

3. CPSMA, in co-operation with CSP, is launching a project to help Catholic schools develop their capacity for dealing with children of all faiths and none. Such children are already present in most primary schools and the aim of the project is to foster best practice and share it across all schools. Survey work on this important issue has already been conducted by CPSMA and this will contribute to the development of the project.
4. Action needs to be taken concerning deeds of variation. The Minister gave a commitment at the CPSMA Annual General Meeting (12 April 2013) to deal with the matter during the course of the next year. This is a complex legal issue but the deeds are a fundamental guarantee for denominational schools and are based on an agreement reached many years ago between denominational Patrons and the Minister.

The full text of the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) response is available at www.catholicschools.ie.

GUIDELINES ON RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

An integral part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum for primary schools is the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). The Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC) has approved '*Guidelines on Relationships and Sexuality Education*' for use in Catholic primary schools. The current publication, which updates *Relationships and Sexuality Education in Catholic Schools (1997)*, sets out the context within which RSE takes place in a Catholic primary school. The guidelines include material which outlines clearly where the Religious Education Programme in a Catholic primary school deals explicitly with the topics outlined in the DES guidelines for RSE. The IEC guidelines were emailed to all member schools on the 13th March 2013. Members are referred to www.cpsma.ie (Reference library) for a copy of the guidelines.

GUIDELINES FROM THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IN REGARD TO HOLYDAYS OF OBLIGATION

Holydays of Obligation are major feasts of the Church's year on which - in addition to Sundays - Catholics are obliged to go to Mass. They are also to abstain from such work or business that would inhibit the worship to be given to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day or the due relaxation of mind and body (Code of Canon Law 1247).

The Church has retained a number of its feasts as Holydays of Obligation. The major ones are known as Solemnities when those who are able are expected to attend Mass.

Holydays of Obligation in Ireland: Immaculate Conception (8th December), Christmas Day (25th December), Epiphany (6th January), St. Patrick's Day (17th March), Assumption of Our Lady (15th August) and All Saints (1st November).

The Episcopal Conference at its general meeting of March 2005 discussed the observance of Holydays of Obligation and the ethos of Catholic schools in Ireland today. It was agreed that Holydays of Obligation, which are days of special worship and celebration, are a valuable expression of the ethos of a Catholic school.

Consequently, it is desirable that all Catholic schools observe, as far as possible, the Holydays of Obligation as they are entitled to do in accordance with an agreement reached with the education partners in March 2004 (Circular 21/04).

The Bishops decided that the ultimate decision about whether or not a school will remain closed on Holydays of Obligation be made at BoM level in consultation with the Trustees/Patron of the School. This decision should also be made in consultation with other BoMs in the area.

Should a Catholic school decide to open for the instruction of pupils on Holydays of Obligation, the Bishops decided that the school community should be encouraged to attend Mass within the school day where feasible. It was agreed that the opportunity should be availed of to provide good catechesis for the preparation and celebration of the feast. Resources and materials for parishes and school communities for use in providing good catechesis for celebration of Holydays of Obligation are being prepared by the Catechetics Council of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

DES Circular 0034/2011 Standardisation of the School Year in respect of Primary & Post Primary Schools for the years 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 deals with this issue, as well as other school closures from 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2014.

Circular 0034/2011 states standardised school closures “are agreed without prejudice to closure on specific days, subject to the overall requirement of 183 days at primary level, dictated by religious observance that is required in schools under the patronage of different denominations or faiths.”

Provision is made in circular 0034/2011 for the use of discretionary days. The scheduling of such days must not be used to extend or modify the periods set out in the circular in respect of mid-term, Christmas or Easter breaks, save where religious observance requirements of a school under a particular patronage make this necessary.

It is therefore possible to remain closed after the Christmas holiday until 7th January 2014 and comply with the requirements of Circular 0034/2011. In this regard BoMs should consult with the Patron/Trustees prior to making a decision on whether to open/close on 6th January 2014.

THE SINGLE PUBLIC SERVICE PENSION SCHEME FOR TEACHERS AND SNAS

The Single Public Service Pension Scheme (“Single Scheme”), as provided for in The Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act, 2012 was commenced with effect from the 1st January 2013. In Circular 07/2013 the Minister for Education & Skills sets out certain responsibilities that must be carried out by a BoM in order to implement the terms of the Act.

The BoM was obliged up to the 31st December 2012, to indicate whether a person is a “new entrant” in accordance with the terms of Circular 10/04. This is no longer required, having now been superseded by the Single Pension Scheme from 1st January 2013.

The DES now places an obligation on BoMs to check and record, at the time of appointment [on the basis of the appointee’s self declaration] whether the person is a member of the Single Scheme. Declaration forms for teachers/SNAs employed simultaneously in another public service post (Form S46) and for teachers/SNAs in receipt of a public service pension (Form SPS/S51) are attached to Circular 007/2013. For all other teachers/SNAs the declaration can be in the form of a letter confirming membership, or otherwise, of the “Single Scheme”. It is understood that the DES is currently revising the appointment forms for teachers and SNAs in line with the provisions of Circular 07/2013.

The BoM must also check whether the person being appointed was previously employed and/or had resigned/retired from a post in teaching/as a special needs assistant or any other pensionable public service employment. In any such case, where a break in service greater than 26 weeks occurred, any subsequent rehiring as a teacher or special needs assistant is contingent on membership of the Single Pension Scheme.

The relevant details must be completed in the standard appointment form being submitted to the DES. In the case of substitute or part-time appointees the relevant details must be input into the On Line Claims System (OLCS).

What does a BoM need to do?

1. Consult Circular 007/2013
2. Ascertain whether or not the teacher/SNA is a member of the Single Pension Scheme
3. Ensure that the appointee is aware of his/her responsibility regarding the completion of the relevant declaration form (S46 or SPS/S51) or letter, as applicable.
4. Check whether the person being appointed was previously employed and had resigned/retired from a teaching/SNA post or any other pensionable public service employment
5. Ensure that the correct information is provided to the DES on the appointment form/that correct information is input onto the OLCS.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

CPSMA continues to work in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), ‘*Energy in Education programme*’, as the contact point for members wishing to send a representative to an Energy Management course.

Feedback from course attendees has been very positive, with participating schools recording significant savings. SEAI energy advisors who have worked with the registered schools have highlighted the following areas as the most common for potential savings: schools on wrong tariff, incurring penalties; lights being used where there was plenty of natural light; changing PC’s from standby to hibernate; unexplained night usage etc.

The [SEAI](http://www.seai.ie) website [“YOUR SCHOOL” section] has useful teaching resources, in addition to guidance on energy management in schools. Attendance at the Energy Management course is free. For further information visit www.cpsma.ie or contact ldunne@cpsma.ie.

REDEPLOYMENT PANELS

The DES has issued the main redeployment panels. Schools with vacancies have until 31st May to fill their vacancies from those panels. Thereafter the DES has stated that panel officers will be appointed to facilitate redeployment of surplus permanent/CID holding teachers. Circular 0013/2013 contains information for schools on the operation of the redeployment process. The DES has also published “Redeployment Arrangements at Primary Level for Surplus Permanent and CID Holding Teachers” (April 2013) which supersedes the Panel Booklet for Teachers (2005). Both documents are available at www.cpsma.ie and www.education.ie. CPSMA will keep members updated in relation to the panels at www.cpsma.ie.

RECENTLY ISSUED CIRCULARS

0007/2013 - Single Public Service Pension Scheme

0009/2013 - Maternity Protection Entitlements for Registered Teachers.

0010/2013 - Scheme of Grants Towards the Purchase of Essential Assistive Technology Equipment for pupils with Physical or Communicative Disabilities

0013/2013 - Staffing Schedule for the 2013/2014 School Year

0014/2013 - Supervision Allowance in Primary Schools

0017/2013 - Maternity Leave Entitlements for Special Needs Assistants

0018/2013 - Adoptive Leave for Registered Teachers

0019/2013 - Adoptive Leave for Special Needs Assistants

CHARITIES ACT SUBMISSION

CPSMA made a submission to the Charities Regulation Unit of the Department of Justice & Equality regarding the consultation on the implementation of the Charities Act, 2009. In its submission CPSMA, *inter alia*, welcomed the exemption of schools from the annual financial reporting requirements set out in the Charities Act, 2009. CPSMA pointed out that schools should not be required to individually register with the Charities Regulatory Authority and that serious consideration should be given to all schools being deemed registered by using roll numbers, as this would decrease the administrative burdens on schools. This could be done through liaison with the DES. CPSMA also opposed the payment of a registration fee. The full text of the submission is available at www.cpsma.ie (Submission section).

CPSMA MEMBERSHIP

The CPSMA annual membership fee covering the period 1/09/2013 to 31/08/2014 is now due. CPSMA services, which include the Newsletter, access to the CPSMA website, customised advice, CPSMA training, the updated CPSMA handbook (2012) etc. are available exclusively to members.

The fees and bands are as set out in correspondence recently sent to schools and can also be accessed at www.cpsma.ie CPSMA fees may be paid in any one of the following three ways - online at www.cpsma.ie or by cheque or directly into the CPSMA bank account number 10621585, sort code 98 60 95, Ulster Bank, Maynooth branch.

If paying directly into the CPSMA bank account PLEASE return the completed **membership form** by post to CPSMA, New House, St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, Co Kildare. Please use the **school’s roll number as your identifier** so that the payment can be cross referenced with the bank i.e. when making the lodgement, on the lodgement document in the box called *narrative* please insert the roll number of the school. Your co-operation is appreciated in this regard.

CPSMA thanks all its members for their continuing work with Catholic schools