

**National Programme of Training
for
Boards of Management of Primary Schools**

Handouts

**The Board as Corporate Entity:
Function, Roles
and
The Board in Action**



June 2012
(Amended Version)

National Programme of Training for Boards of Management

The Board as Corporate Entity

2012

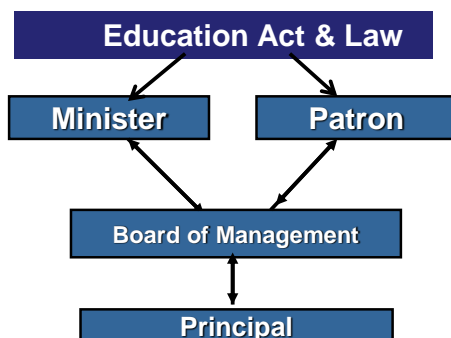
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Role & Functions of Board of Management

- Corporate responsibility
- Role and functions
- Relationships with others
- The Board in action
- Q & A

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Overview



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Who is on the BoM?

Schools with more than one teacher:

- 2 direct nominees of the Patron
- 2 parents of children enrolled in the school (*one mother, one father*)
- The principal teacher
- One other teacher on the staff of the school, elected by vote of the teaching staff including the principal
- 2 extra members proposed by the six above

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Board as corporate body

- All 8 members of the Board, once appointed, act together as a unit
- Individuals do not act as representing various groups within the Board ...
- "Nominees" not "representatives"

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Body Corporate

A succession or collection of persons having, in the estimation of the law, an existence and rights and duties separate from those of the persons who form it from time to time.

Murdoch's Dictionary of Irish Law (2004) p.113

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Indemnity

The Board and the individual members of a Board are a corporate body and as individuals are indemnified for any claims made against them under Section 14 (7) of the Education Act, 1998 provided the members act in good faith.

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Functions of the BoM

- Manage the school on behalf of the Patron & provide an appropriate education for each student
- Act in accordance with legislation & policy
- Uphold ethos/characteristic spirit
- Consult & inform patron
- Publish policies
- Be accountable S.18 Education Act

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Board of Management ...

The Pupils:

The school exists for the pupils.

The educational progress and the welfare of the students should be the overriding consideration in all decisions arrived at by the BoM

The staff:

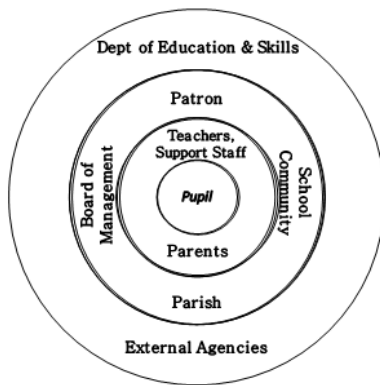
The staff are the single most valuable and important asset of the school...

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Who is involved in a school?

- Children
- Parents/guardians
- Principal
- Teachers – classroom, resource, Learning-Support etc.
- Deputy principal, assistant principal, special duties teacher (Posts of Responsibility)
- Shared teachers
- Special Needs Assistant(s)
- Secretary & Caretaker
- Cleaner
- Inspector
- Diocesan advisors
- Visiting teachers - for sensory impaired
- Health professionals
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Patron
- Trustees
- INTO, IMPACT, SIPTU
- Management Bodies e.g. CPSMA, C of I, Educate Together, An Foras...
- Irish Primary Principals' Network
- Parents' Association/National Parents Council
- NEWB/EWO/SENO/NCSE
- Others?

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Your contribution/s ...

- Experience
- Time
- Commitment
- Support to school community
- Opinions and ideas
- Acting collectively as management
- Working as a team
- Learning community

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Good Practices ...

Board itself ...

- Declaration of Acceptance of Membership
- Election of officers
- Delegation of tasks ...
- Regular meetings
- Consider role as BoM and priorities for next 4 years – WSE report
- Build on work of previous board - meet previous board perhaps...
- Meet other boards locally? Post primary contact?
- Information on school – classes, teachers, pupils ...
- School plan
- Circulars/Newsletters from Patron/Patron Body

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Good Practices ...

- Communication – sharing of information
- Decision making following discussion, consultation - preferably by consensus
- Policies and procedures –
 - Give clarity
 - Ratified by BoM
- Confidentiality - Agreed report from each meeting
- Complaints dealt with in accordance with procedure

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Good Practices ...

Working Together as a Board

- Positive/negative issue
- Home school links clarified....
- Complaints procedure

BoM and School Staff

- Meet staff and all working with school – affirmation
- Grievance procedures
- Social occasion/s
- Other ...

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Good Practices ...

The Board and pupils/parents

- Communication in a way all can understand..
- Parents' Association contact
- Social functions
- Other

The Board and the Community

- Newsletter
- School website as means of linking with community
- Support/Attendance at events
- Reaching into the local community/parish...

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Building relationships ...

- **Group 1**
Suggest ways to build relationships between members of the Board itself
- **Group 2**
Suggest ways to build relationships between Board and school staff
- **Group 3**
Suggest ways to build relationships between Board and parents and pupils
- **Group 4**
Suggest ways to build relationships between Board and local community/parish

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The Board of Management in Action

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Meetings ...

- Number
- Duration
- Notification
- Purpose/agenda
- Declaration of interests

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Roles ...

- Chairperson
- Principal teacher
- Recording secretary
- Treasurer
- Other:
 - Maintenance/buildings officer

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Chairperson ...

- Appointed by Patron
- No direct relationship to any other BoM/staff member where practicable
- Convening meetings/agenda
- Chairing meetings/casting vote
- Actions between meetings - reported to BOM at subsequent meeting
- Correspondent with DES & others
- Recruitment of staff
- Capital projects with patron/trustees approval
- Declarations/Forms/Agreements/cheques

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Principal's role...

Day to day management of the school

- Leader of learning – sets objectives for school
- Environment conducive to learning
- Professional development of staff
- Parental involvement
- Is central to carrying out functions of the school and board

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Secretary (Principal) ...

- Notification of meetings
 - Items for agenda
 - Correspondence prepared for chairperson
 - Minutes of meetings
 - Filing and recording
 - Provide members of BoM with latest relevant books, circulars, publications
- [Chairperson remains as correspondent for BoM]

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Recording Secretary...

Duties confined to:

1. Setting agenda in consultation with Chairperson + Principal
2. Keeping minutes in an appropriate form, retained in a safe place, made available on request to representatives of Patron, DES, Trustees
3. Recording decisions reached – number of votes for and against

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Treasurer ...

- Elected from among members-cannot be Principal or teacher nominee
- School accounts
- Treasurer's report

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Maintenance/Buildings Officer ...

Responsibility for:

- Cleaning staff/cleaning contractors
- Caretaker
- Materials/equipment

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Safety issues...

Responsibility for:

- Health and Safety statement
- Maintenance of security & fire alarm system
- Co-ordinating a list of out of hours key holders for the school
- Other...

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Other functions to delegate ...

- Use of school for after hours activities
- Holiday maintenance
- Research ...
- Relationships with community/parish
- 'Research' as required
- Other ...

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Agenda ...

- **Opening: prayer/other depending on ethos**
Bereavements etc. noted here
- **Attendance and apologies**
- **Minutes:**
 - Drawn up by secretary
 - Confidential to those entitled to be at the particular meeting/s
 - Patron & DES can have access
 - Decisions recorded and read aloud
 - Agreed and signed by chairperson

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Agenda ...

- **Matters arising from minutes**
 - Follow up on decisions ...
- **Correspondence**
 - Relevant correspondence to chairperson should be brought to Board's attention
 - Circulars, newsletters etc.
 - Letters of complaint etc. dealt with in accordance with procedures
 - Legal advice
- **Finance**
 - Treasurer's report at every meeting

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Agenda ...

- **Principal teacher's report**
Information and advice
- **AoB**
- **Agreed report**
Confidentiality
What information? To whom? By whom? How?
- **Suggestion**
Section of Handbook/policy for review at each meeting ...
- **Next meeting**
Date/time

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Principal's Report ...

Significant issues of concern related to life & function of the school

- Child Protection
- Literacy /numeracy
- Enrolment
- Staff *e.g.* in-service needs
- Posts of Responsibility - issues
- Teacher absences
- Pupil absences – Education Welfare Act
- Applications for...
- Public relations
- Tours

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Principal's Report ...

- Holidays and closures
- Repairs
- Health and Safety
- Future planning
- Transition to post-primary
- Class allocation
- Religious events/festivals
- Visitors
- Special needs
- Recent circulars

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Principal's Report ...

- Issues in relation to staffing
- Supervision
- Parent teacher meetings
- Policy issues
- Legislation
- Training/professional development
- Resource requirements
- Other...

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Sub committees ...

- **Finance**
 - **Maintenance**
 - **Research**
 - **Legislation etc.**
 - Co-opt expertise as required and draft guidelines for terms of reference, time scale, reporting to BOM etc.
 - Minority from outside the BOM
- Good practice:
- Liaise with other BoM locally
 - Beware BoM decisions impinging on another school

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Procedures

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Procedures

- Addressing Parental Complaints
- Dealing with Workplace Bullying and Harassment
- Addressing Staff Relations Difficulties
- Grievance Procedure

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Backdrop...

- Each employee is personally responsible for his/her own work, conduct, performance, attendance etc.
- Employees to be given copies of procedures
- Address issues at the earliest opportunity
- Employees must co-operate with procedures

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Parental Complaints

General Principles:

- Seek to resolve
 - with teacher
 - with principal
 - with Chairperson of Board of Management
- Procedures currently under review

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Role of Department of Education & Skills

- Should refer complainant back to Board of Management
- Implementation of S.28 awaited
- If issues involves functioning of BoM the Minister may have a role under S. 19

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Avoiding difficulties ...

- Good internal communication
- Processes of decision making which are inclusive
- Effective school policies and procedures which give clarity
- Mutual respect
- A sense of fairness
- Conflict resolution procedures ...

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Natural Justice and Fair Procedure

- Applicable Procedures
- Matters must be fairly examined & processed
- Details of any allegation or complaints are put to the employee
- Employee given opportunity to respond
- Right of employee to be represented
- Legal representation is not envisaged
- Right to fair & impartial determination
- Adhere to timeframes
- Keep records

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Other training modules ...

- Appointment Procedures
- Legal Issues: Policies and procedures arising from legislation, guidelines and circulars
- Board Finances & the Role of Treasurer
- Child Protection

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Essential reading for Board Members ...

- Department of Education & Skills:
 - *Constitution of Boards & Rules of Procedure (2011)*
- Department Circulars
- Newsletters from Management Body
- Looking at Our School
- Other...

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Some sources of information

- www.education.ie
- www.cpsma.ie
- www.foras.ie
- www.educatetogether.ie
- gaelscoileanna.ie
- www.nabmse.org/
- www.into.ie
- www.equality.ie
- www.hsa.ie
- www.npc.ie

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Reminders

- Register signed
- Evaluations completed and returned
- Handouts
- Arrangements for next training session (*if applicable*)
- Other modules available include:
 - Appointment Procedures
 - Board Finances and the Role of Treasurer
 - Legal Issues. Policies and procedures arising from legislation, guidelines and circulars
 - Child Protection

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Organisations and Acronyms

Organisations

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Board of Education | Church of Ireland Board of Education, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6 Tel: 01 497 8422 |
| CPSMA | Catholic Primary School Management Association, New House, St Patrick's College, Maynooth Co. Kildare Tel: 01 6292462, 1850 – 407200 email: info@cpsma.ie website: www.cpsma.ie |
| DES | Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough St., Dublin 1 Tel: 01 889 6400 email: info@education.gov.ie website: www.education.ie |
| Educate Together | email: info@educatetogether.ie website: www.educatetogether.ie |
| Foras Pátrúnachta | Foras Pátrúnachta na Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge Teo, An Foras Pátrúnachta Bloc K3 Campas Gnó Mhaigh Nuad Maigh Nuad Co. Chill Dara Tel :01 629 4410 email: foraspatrunachta@hotmail.com website: foras.ie |
| IMPACT | Trade Union: www.impact.ie |
| INTO | Irish National Teachers Organisation: www.into.ie |
| IPPN | Irish Primary Principals' Network: www.ippn.ie |
| NABMSE | National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education, Kildare Education Centre, Friary Rd, Kildare, Co Kildare. Tel: 045 533 753 email: info@nabmse.org website: www.nabmse.org/ |

| | |
|--|--|
| NCCA | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 Tel: 01 661 7177 email: info@ncca.ie website: www.ncca.ie |
| NCSE | National Council for Special Education, 1-2 Mill Street, Trim, Co. Meath. Tel: 046 948 6400 email: info@ncse.ie website: www.ncse.ie |
| NCTE | National Centre for Technology in Education, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel: 01 700 8200 email: info@ncte.ie website: www.ncte.ie |
| NEPS | National Educational Psychological Service, Frederick Court, 24/27 North Frederick St., Dublin 1 Tel: 01 889 2700 website: www.education.ie |
| NEWB | National Education Welfare Board, 16-22 Green Street Dublin 7 Tel: 01 8738700 email: info@newb.ie website: www.newb.ie |
| SESS | Special Education Support Service, Cork Education Support Centre, The Rectory, Western Rd, Cork. Tel: 1850 200 884 email: info@sess.ie website: www.sess.ie |
| Teaching Council | The Teaching Council, Block A, Maynooth Business campus, Maynooth, Co. Kildare Tel: LoCall 1890 224 224, 01 651 7900 email: info@teachingcouncil.ie website: www.teachingcouncil.ie |
| Teacher Education Section (TES) | Teacher Education Section, Department of Education & Skills, Marlborough St., Dublin 1 <i>This unit has a role in all national initiatives</i> |

Acronyms

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| AP | Assistant Principal |
| BOM | Board of Management |
| DP | Deputy Principal |
| DEIS | Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools – an action plan for educational inclusion |
| Early Start | The Early Start Programme is a one-year programme offered to children aged 3-4 years in selected schools in areas of designated disadvantage |
| EWO | Education Welfare Officer |
| HSCL | Home School Community Liaison now part of NEWB |
| IEP | Individual Educational Plan |
| Inspector | Department of Education and Skills inspector |
| IPLP | Individual Profile and Learning Programme |
| Mainstream Teacher | Class teacher |
| NPC | National Parents Council |
| NQT | Newly qualified teacher |
| PA | Parent Association |
| Partners | Parents, Board of Management etc. involved in a school's activities |
| Patron | Schools operate under a patron body e.g. Catholic Church, Educate Together, Church of Ireland Board of Education, An Foras Pátrúnachta, Islamic Board of Education ... |
| PoR | Post of Responsibility e.g. deputy principal, assistant principal, special duties teacher |
| SENO | Special Education Needs Organiser |
| Shared teachers | Teachers working in a number of schools to support children with special needs |
| SIPTU | Trade Union |
| SNA | Special Needs Assistant |
| Special duties teacher | Teachers with a special responsibility for organisational or curriculum issues in addition to their teaching duties |
| Trustees | The persons nominated by the Patron as trustees of the school. They are parties to the lease of the school premises. The Trustees undertake that the buildings shall continue to be used as a national school for the term of the lease & guarantee that the premises and contents are insured |
| Visiting teachers | Teachers working with pupils who are sensory impaired |

Strategies for building relationships

Strategies for building relationships within Board of Management

- Have a social night; social event after meeting to familiarise members with each other; tea and biscuit – before/after
- Hold regular meetings; Train/learn together as a team
- Work on policies together – do one policy area at each meeting perhaps
- Share responsibility – assign tasks more broadly – work to peoples' strengths/skills, delegate tasks to members according to interests/abilities
- Ensure everyone's voice is heard at meetings
- Share basic information with all members – empower people – give everyone confidence through knowledge – make them comfortable
- Keep length of meeting to 2 hours approximately
- Number of meetings over the year laid out clearly – minimum 5
- Annual 'get together' (Christmas) with BoM; Parents Association members
- Fund Raising activities; Saturday morning breakfast to meet parents involved
- Prize giving time – parents in attendance; attend school celebrations/assemblies
- Sub-committee to have brainstorming sessions

Building relationships between Board and School Staff

- Board get to know school staff – maybe arrange a function or meeting at start and then again at end of year for all
- Distribute list of staff members and BoM members to each group
- Sheet with classes and teachers'/support staff names giving to BoM members
- Mark the celebration of events in school as a Board/Staff meeting
- Social occasions – some boards may doubt value of such functions but this interaction is very valuable; social functions should play an important part in familiarisation; perhaps if funds cannot be found for social occasion – might be paid for by people themselves
- Board invites teachers to drinks/wine and cheese – affirmation very important
- Social events to meet informally – Christmas drinks, tea/coffee
- Working Groups: BoM reps.; Staff reps.; Parents reps working on school policies and procedures; sports days/special occasions. BoM invited to such occasions/events, e.g. school concerts ... 'Service of Light'/festivals etc.
- Make sure staff know names of each new board member - memo to teaching staff informing them of names of the BoM; Board should also be made aware of those on parents' committees, etc.
- Involve Board as much as possible in day-to-day events in school; Open day (art exhibition)
- Newsletter informing parents and staff of news items
- Formal discussion at BoM meeting re the importance of members' availability for social/informal meeting

Building relationships between Boards, Parents and Pupils

- Communication – Names of new Board members to parents and pupils
- Newsletter – about school issues
- Open Day – where Board member would meet parents
- Parent Association meeting with Board – information and social
- Presentation of awards to pupils
- Attendance at pupil events – games and concerts
- Graduation night
- Attendance at religious celebrations/events/festivals
- Pupil involvement in projects
- Joint fundraising
- Children's council have access to Board. Tell their issues
- Be visible on daily basis
- June – internal induction day for pupils and parents; Open days; Coffee morning, especially for parent of junior infants
- Parents' Association works co-operatively with BoM and information should be shared
- Board members to be included at functions – be present at local events relating to school/community
- Dance club/swimming club – parents involved; may need teachers to be involved
- Pub quiz/race nights

Building relationship between Board and Local Community

- Make school available for various groups – within ethos of school
- Board members available – e.g. open days.
- Communicate through newsletter, church
- Establish lines of communication, via school/principal
- Raise profile on BoM among parents
- Invite representatives from the wider community to be part of the Board
- Get involved in community initiatives, e.g., wisdom of age and youth; build links with local council; meet local politicians
- Community based fundraising – e.g. Christmas fair
- Contributing to fundraisers e.g. Amnesty International, Co-operation North
- Inviting people into the school e.g., gardai, local doctors, Health Board, Youth Services
- Inviting speakers in to give talks e.g., bullying, anti-drugs
- Building positive relations with local media –invite them to cover event
- Always thank people for their contribution
- Make the board known to local community

- Build relationships with local businesses
- Make connection with local developers/builders for mutual benefit
- Support local groups, e.g., Tidy Town, Green Schools initiatives
- Bring in members of the community to talk to children about their profession
- Accommodate transition year pupils, teaching practice, special needs assistants for work experience
- Contact local agencies
- Meet with other BoMs in local schools
- Send out Newsletters
- Engage the support of local businesses
- Work with and through the Parents Association
- Make contact with sports bodies/leisure bodies
- Newsletter – BoM – taking a slot in a local newsletter/paper
- Attend local Community Meetings
- Attend local celebrations representing the school in an official capacity

Responsibilities of Safety Representative

(Health & Safety Act, 2005)

The Duties of **safety representative** are spelled out in section 33 Health & Safety Act 2005 section 25.—(1) ... employees may, from time to time, select and appoint from amongst their number at their place of work a ...safety representative... to represent them at the place of work in consultation with their employer on matters related to safety, health and welfare at the place of work. (2) A safety representative may— (a) inspect the whole or any part of the place of work— (i) subject to *subsection (3)*, after giving reasonable notice to the employer, or (ii) immediately, in the event of an accident, dangerous occurrence or imminent danger or risk to the safety, health and welfare of any person, (b) investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences provided that he or she does not interfere with or obstruct the performance of any statutory obligation required to be performed by any person under any of the relevant statutory provisions, (c) after the giving of reasonable notice to the employer, investigate complaints relating to safety, health and welfare at work made by any employee whom he or she represents, (d) accompany an inspector who is carrying out an inspection of the place of work under *section 64* other than an inspection for the purpose of investigating an accident or dangerous occurrence, (e) at the discretion of the inspector concerned, accompany an inspector who is carrying out an inspection under *section 64* for the purpose of investigating an accident or dangerous occurrence, (f) at the discretion of the inspector concerned, where an employee is interviewed by an inspector with respect to an accident or dangerous occurrence at a place of work, attend the interview where the employee so requests, (g) make representations to the employer on any matter relating to safety, health and welfare at the place of work, (h) make oral or written representations to inspectors on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at the place of work, including the investigation of accidents or dangerous occurrences, (i) receive advice and information from inspectors on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at the place of work, or (j) consult and liaise on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at work with any other safety representatives who may be appointed in the undertaking concerned..... (3) The employer and the safety representative shall, having regard to the nature and extent of the hazards in the place of work, agree the frequency or schedule of inspections which may be carried out under *subsection (2)(a)(i)*, which agreement shall not be unreasonably withheld by the employer. (4) Every employer shall consider any representations made to him or her by the safety representative in relation to the matters specified in this section or

any other matter relating to the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees and, so far as is reasonably practicable, take any action that he or she considers necessary or appropriate with regard to those representations. (5) An employer shall give to a safety representative such time off from his or her work as is reasonable having regard to all the circumstances, without loss of remuneration, to enable the safety representative— (a) to acquire, on an ongoing basis, the knowledge and training necessary to discharge his or her functions as a safety representative, and (b) to discharge those functions.

Additional information available from - Guidelines on Risk Assessments & Safety Statements downloadable for free from www.hsa.ie; A Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in the School (Church and General) currently being updated; Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 in relation to equipment, VDUs, protective clothing, electricity, and much more are available from Government Publications. Check INTO website also for information.

Overview of the School Plan

| General School Details | Vision and Mission | Curriculum Plans | Organisational Policies | Procedures and Practices | Development Section |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Personnel • Subjects taught • Opening and closing times • Books • Uniform • Extra Curricular Activities • Other relevant details | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and Mission Statement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaeilge • English • Maths • Visual Arts • Drama • Music • Geography • Science • History • Physical Education • S.P.H.E. | <p>Mentioned in Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment • Health and Safety • Code of Behaviour • Anti-bullying policy • Equality • Sexual Harassment • Access to records • Attendance • Parental Involvement <p>Supported by National Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning support • RSE • Substance Use • Child Protection • Intercultural Education • Assessment <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of medicines • Accidents and injuries • Communications • Homework • ICT and Internet Use • Induction of new teachers • Staff development • Record keeping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School calendar • Visitors –sales reps., others • Arrival and dismissal of pupils • Exceptional closures • Supervision duties • Photocopying and copyright issues • Text book selection • Book rental scheme • Use of mobile phones • Healthy lunches • Class / classroom allocation • Keeping of class records and roll books • Transfer of essential information • Teacher absences • Staff meetings • Reception of substitute or student teachers • School tours • Extra curricular activities • Promotion/marketing of commercial products • Participation in competitions/festivals • Contact with other schools • Transition to second level • Other... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development plan/Strategic Plan • Planning diary • Action plan • Pilot Projects • Any other document/list that provides evidence of work in progress |