



CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

# Brief Absences Policy Prompt



## Brief Absences

**Notice:** This resource is intended to assist schools in devising their own policy statement on brief absences. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, schools are advised to consult up to date circulars, recent legislation and/or guidelines from relevant agencies if they have specific queries regarding this topic.

**This note is for guidance only and does not purport to be a legal interpretation**

The term '*Brief Absences*' is used to describe short-term occasional absences sanctioned for staff during the school year. The **prior approval** of the Chairperson of the Board of Management must be granted for all absences. This document does not refer to sick leave absences of any type.

**For teachers refer to circulars** [0018/2013](#); [0009/2013](#), [0035/2010](#), [0035/2009](#); [0032/2007](#); [90/2006](#); [01/2001](#); [37/97](#); and the [Juries Act 1976](#).

**For SNA's refer to circulars** [Circular 0019/2013](#); [0017/2013](#); [32/2010](#); [Pay SNA 18/04](#); [PPT 007/04](#);

**For Clerical Officer and Caretakers refer to** DES documentation; [Adoptive Leave Act 2005](#), [Maternity Protection \(Amendment\) Act 2004](#); [Adoptive Leave Act 1995](#); [Maternity Protection Act 1994](#); [Juries Act 1976](#) .

**For other employees refer to** [Parental Leave \(Amendment\) Act, 2006](#); [Adoptive Leave Act, 2005](#); [Maternity Protection \(Amendment\) Act, 2004](#); [Parental Leave Act, 1998](#) ; [Adoptive Leave Act, 1995](#); [Maternity Protection \(Health and Safety Leave Certification\) Regulations 1995 \(SI No. 19 of 1995\)](#); [Maternity Protection Act 1994](#) ; [Juries Act 1976](#).

### Questions the school may need to address:

- **Who is entitled to take brief absences? What categories of leave are available to staff – teachers/ancillary staff?**
- **What is the likely impact of such absences on pupils' learning/the school and how can that be minimised?**
- **Procedure for making an application for leave:**
  - Should application be made directly to the chairperson of the Board of Management or via the principal? Is the method of application the same for all leave types?
  - Is there a limit to the number of teachers/SNAs/other staff members who may be granted leave at the same time?
  - In the case of EPV days
    - should certification of attendance and completion of a qualifying summer course be submitted prior to application for EPV days? Should certification be submitted at the start of the school year?
    - to whom is the application made?
    - is there a limit on the number of teachers that may avail of EPV days on any given day? If yes, how will the decision be taken in the event of multiple applications for any given day?
    - is there a limit on the number of EPV days that a teacher may avail of at any one time?
    - can EPV days be taken directly after a teachers own wedding leave days?
    - can EPV days be utilised to extend school holidays/bank holidays/school closures? If yes, how will the decision be taken in the event of multiple applications for any given day?

- are there any periods of time when EPV days cannot be taken e.g. the month of June? If so will any exceptions be made? Who will make the decision to grant the exceptional leave during these periods? Should written application for exceptional EPV leave be made to the BoM?
- **Notifying the school of unexpected absences:**
  - Is there a standard procedure for notifying the school in the event of an unexpected absence?
  - Who will ensure that the staff members' duties are undertaken in the event of a replacement not being employed during the brief absence?
  - In the case of teachers who will ensure that the teacher's class is supervised and that other responsibilities (e.g. playground supervision) are covered?
  - In the case of no SNA cover being available who will reassign duties and responsibilities of the SNA?
  - Has the whole staff discussed and agreed the issue of supervision when a teacher is absent? (See Circular 29/03, Sections 5.9 – 5.11) (**Note:** Teachers appointed after February 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, who were not previously in receipt of the supervision allowance and who opt into supervision, are required to undertake 12 extra hours in addition to the 37 hours required under DES Circular 29/03)
- **In the case of leave where substitution is not paid for by the Department of Education and Skills** (e.g. EPV days, exam leave, teacher's own wedding...)
  - Will the BoM engage a substitute teacher? [**Note:** BoM should be aware of its obligations in regard to statutory deductions etc. Refer to CPSMA Newsletter Issue 19, November 2012]
  - How will payment for substitution be funded?
  - Will the pupils of the teacher on leave be distributed amongst other classes? If so, how is this distribution organised? What procedures are in place to meet the educational needs of the children for the duration of the teacher's absence?

