

Revised 2012



Catholic Primary Schools Management Association Handbook

Lámhleabhar Chumann Bainistíochta na mBunscoileanna Caitliceacha



Catholic Primary Schools' Management Association

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
HANDBOOK 2012

Dedication

This handbook is dedicated to the memory of the late Canon Frank Kelly, who served as National Chairman of CPSMA from 1995 to 2001 and again from 2005 to the time of his death in January 2009.

Ar Dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPSMA Standing Committee thanks Allianz Insurance Company for its contribution towards the production of this Handbook.

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Introduction

Boards of Management are a wonderful example of volunteerism through the commitment of approximately 18,000 members to the management of Catholic primary schools.

The Catholic Primary Schools' Management Association (CPSMA) endeavours to support those volunteers in their work by the provision of advice, training and information over the life time of the Board of Management. Specific queries in regard to the work of the Board of Management can be addressed to the CPSMA office. CPSMA also represents the voice of management at national level with the partners in education.

This Handbook is intended as a guide for Boards of Management to be used in conjunction with (1) *Boards of Management of National Schools Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*, Department of Education & Skills (DES) (2) DES Circular letters (3) Regulations issued by other relevant departments (4) patron requirements (5) CPSMA guidance. A significant number of

pieces of legislation have been passed which impact directly on the Board of Management. The Education Act 1998 in particular sets out the role and functions of those involved in the management of schools.

The reproduction of circular letters in this handbook has been avoided with a few exceptions i.e. where circulars are less accessible or are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

As Circular letters change or are superseded by more up to date circulars or legislation from time to time, **Boards are advised that they should check for the most recent updates on the website of CPSMA at www.cpsma.ie and/or the website of the Department of Education & Skills at www.education.ie** The CPSMA website also offers to members a searchable facility by topic or title.

CPSMA hopes that this Handbook coupled with training, advice, newsletter and website support will be of assistance to Boards of Management.

CPSMA Services to Boards of Management

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

- Teaching staff
- Secretary
- Caretaker
- Special Needs Assistant
- Bus Escort
- Cleaner
- Others

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

- Appointment procedures
- Seniority
- Panel rights
- Redundancy
- Vetting
- Disciplinary matters
- Leave
- Payroll issues
- Posts of responsibility
- Appeals
- Grievance procedures

GENERAL ISSUES

- Health and Safety
- Child Protection
- Administration of Medicine
- Insurance
- Enrolment
- Section 29 Appeals
- Legislation
- Discipline
- Special Educational Needs
- Buildings
- DES schemes/ grants
- Supervision
- Parental complaints

CPSMA WEBSITE: www.cpsma.ie

Valuable source of information - updated daily - easily accessible.

A wide variety of template documents are available e.g. employment contracts, letters of offer, organisational policy prompts, legislation, FAQs, DES and other guidelines as well as current news items.

CPSMA NEWSLETTER

- Published regularly
- Up to date information
- Circulated in hard copy to Chairpersons and Principals
- Available on website @ www.cpsma.ie

TRAINING: DES MODULES ON OFFER

- Child Protection
- Appointment Procedures
- The Board as a Corporate Entity
- Board Finances and the Role of the Treasurer
- Legal Issues

CPSMA also provides training for members

REPRESENTATION

CPSMA, in representing the Boards of Management of primary schools, is in regular contact, discussion and negotiation with the following:

- DES
- NPC
- INTO
- SIPTU
- IMPACT
- IPPN
- NEWB
- NCCA
- NCSE
- NEPS
- Allianz
- NCTE
- Others...

COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

- Teaching Council
- NCCA
- NCSE
- School Accommodation Committee
- TCC
- Other

MEDIA

CPSMA deals with media enquiries on a range of current matters to advance the interests of Boards of Management.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

The Handbook is available to all members of the Board of Management.

SECTION 1

The Primary School System in Ireland

Origin of the Primary School System

There have been schools of one kind or another in Ireland for many centuries. From the earliest Christian times, the monasteries were centres of learning. The monks provided education for many in this country and also brought their learning to several European countries.

During penal times, when schools for Catholics were forbidden, the Irish love of learning was kept alive by hedge-school masters, wandering poets and the Seanchaí. Priests who had been trained abroad shared their knowledge with people of the locality, sometimes under the disguise of the Spailpíní (migratory labourers), a term derived from '*spa*' meaning '*scythe*' and '*peen*', a '*penny*' - (a worker at a penny a day).

The names of many of these teachers are still revered among local communities around the country.

Schools that were established during the eighteenth century either by Royal Charter or by various Societies were not generally attended by Catholic children.

Following Relief Acts at the end of the eighteenth century, lay Catholics (among them Edmund Ignatius Rice, Nano Nagle and Catherine McAuley, each of whom subsequently established religious orders) and individual priests, as well as a small number of religious orders, began setting up schools for Catholic children. Since the number of these schools was small, however, acceptable education was not available on a regular or widespread basis to the majority of young people in the country.

Catholic Emancipation was granted in 1829.

Two years later, in 1831, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, E.G. Stanley, wrote to the Duke of Leinster to announce a decision by parliament to provide funding for a network of primary schools in this country.

It is generally accepted that the structure of the present system of primary schools is based on the provisions of the 'Stanley Letter'. The 'Stanley Letter' outlined a system of 'national schools' with local patronage/management that, it was hoped, would be acceptable to all the Churches in Ireland. Public funding would be available on certain conditions, which included the involvement of the local clergy and religious, in the provision of the schools. These schools would have combined secular and separate religious instruction.

None of the Churches was satisfied with this arrangement. The Reformed Churches wished to maintain the structures of schools already in place. The Catholic Church, emerging from the period of penal laws, was anxious that its newly won emancipation would extend to education for Catholic children.

By degrees, and arising out of negotiations by all the Churches, modifications were introduced which made the system of schooling more acceptable to members of the different Church communities. A network of national schools was established all around the country. These schools became formal centres of learning, maintaining and enriching the great tradition of scholarship that already existed among the Irish people.

In due course, the school that you are now appointed to manage was established. You should find out about the history of your school. The following paragraph shows the number of primary schools by patron body (2010/11).

There are 3169¹ primary schools in the country. Two thousand, eight hundred and forty one² are under the patronage/management of the Catholic Bishops. One hundred and eighty seven of these schools which are under Catholic patronage operate through the medium of Irish (composed of 106 schools in Gaeltacht areas and 81 gaelscoileanna outside Gaeltacht areas). One hundred and thirty³ schools are called ‘special schools’, providing services for children who have special educational needs. Other patrons include: Church of Ireland (174)⁴, Presbyterian (17), Methodist (1), Jewish (1), Islamic (2), Quaker (1), John Scottus Educational Trust Ltd. (1), Lifeways Ireland Ltd. (2), An Foras Patrúnachta na Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge Teo. (57), Educate Together (National Patron Body) (44), Schools in Educate Together Network with their own patron body (14)⁵, Vocational Education Committees (5)⁶ and the Minister for Education and Skills (9).

For over 140 years, Catholic primary schools were managed by the local priest and were mostly ‘parish schools’. Convent and monastery schools were managed by religious orders. In 1969, following Vatican II, the Catholic Bishops proposed that lay people should become involved in the management of schools.

Since 1975, management is carried out by a Board of Management. A Board of Management of a one teacher school has four members, whereas schools of more than one teacher have an eight member board.

The Constitution of Ireland and Primary Education

The rights and duties of citizens of the state in the matter of education are set out in Articles 42 and 44.2.4 of the Constitution of Ireland as follows:

ARTICLE 42

1. The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.
2. Parents shall be free to provide this education in their homes or in private schools or in schools recognised or established by the State.

¹ Commission on School Accommodation February 2011 at p.20

² Commission on School Accommodation February 2011 at p.20

³ In the main, Special Schools are either under the religious patronage of the Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland or under patronage of various organisations such as the Health Service Executive, Ability West, the Central Remedial Clinic, COPE Foundation, Enable Ireland, Rehab Group, KARE and most recently Autism Ireland. A small number of special schools are under the patronage of various other private organisations and individuals. (See Appendix F for a list of patrons of special schools). Commission on School Accommodation February 2011 at p.20

⁴ One Church of Ireland school has shared patronage with the Methodist Church, four schools have shared patronage with the Presbyterian Church and three schools have individual patron bodies. Commission on School Accommodation February 2011 at p.20/21

⁵ One of these schools is a Gaelscoil Commission on School Accommodation February 2011 at p.20

⁶ Community National Schools are under the interim patronage of the Minister while draft legislation to confirm VEC patronage was published in November 2010. Commission on School Accommodation February 2011 at p.20/21

3.1 The State shall not oblige parents in violation of their conscience and lawful preference to send their children to schools established by the State, or to any particular type of school designated by the State.

3.2 The State shall, however, as guardian of the common good, require in view of actual conditions that the children receive a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social.

4. The State shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation.

5. In exceptional cases, where the parents for physical or moral reasons fail in their duty towards their children, the State as guardian of the common good, by appropriate means shall endeavour to supply the place of the parents, but always with due regard for the natural and imprescriptible rights of the child.

ARTICLE 44.2.4

2.4 Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school.

The Rules for National Schools

The Preface to the Rules for National Schools states as follows:

‘In pursuance of the provisions of these Articles [i.e. 42 and 44.2.4 above] the State provides for free primary education for children in national schools and gives explicit recognition to the denominational character of these schools’.

The Education Act 1998

The Education Act of 1998 expresses *inter alia* the key roles and functions of the patron, the Minister and the board of management in the running of schools.

SECTION 2

The Catholic Church and Primary Education

Overview

This section deals with the following topics:

- Historical background of the Catholic Church in Primary Education
- The Bishop as Patron
- Vision '08 – Text
- 'Share the Good News' - National Directory of Catechesis in Ireland - Extracts
- CSP – A Process for Catholic Primary Schools
- CSP Schools Pamphlet
- Religious Education
- Religious Education and the Rules for National Schools
- Primary School Curriculum 1999
- Ethos/Characteristic Spirit of a Catholic School – Irish Bishops' Conference
- The Ethos of the Catholic Primary School – Sr. Eileen Randles
- Guidelines for the formulation of an Ethos Statement
- Deed of Variation for a Catholic Primary School
- Recognition of qualifications to Teach Religion in Primary Schools
- Religious Qualifications – Guidance Note for Boards

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Based on the teaching of Vatican II⁷, the Catholic Church has the obligation to preach the Gospel and to teach its doctrines and its disciplines to the faithful (cf. canon 747).

One particular means of fulfilling this mission and mandate is through the medium of Catholic schools.⁸ The origins of the Catholic school can be traced to the earliest centuries of the Church's history, usually attached to a church, a cathedral or a monastery of men or women. This practice of operating schools is found throughout the history of the Catholic Church in Eastern and Western Europe and North Africa, in the first millennium, and worldwide in the past five centuries. The history of the Catholic Church in Ireland, from the days of the early Irish monasteries, has been inextricably linked with that of the operation of schools.

Over the centuries, a framework of doctrine and juridical norms has developed in the Catholic Church around the Christian education of children and the operation of Catholic schools, in particular. First and foremost, the parents of children are the primary educators of their children. Canon 793 §1 recognises the duty and the right of Catholic parents "to choose those means and institutes which... can best promote the Catholic education of their children"; Canon 793 §2 acknowledges that these parents have "the right to avail themselves of that assistance from civil society which they need to provide a Catholic education for their children". The Catholic school is understood to be the "principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education" (canon 796 §1) and this will require the closest cooperation between parents and

⁷ *Lumen Gentium* nn. 24; 25; *Christus Dominus* nn. 12; 19; *Dei Verbum* nn. 7-10; *Dignitatis Humanae* n. 13; 15; *Gaudium et Spes* nn. 76; 89

⁸ *Gravissimum educationis* n. 8.

the teachers to whom the parents entrust the education of their children (canon 796 §2): in carrying out their role, the teachers are required to collaborate closely with the parents and listen carefully to them. Finally, among the fundamental rights and obligations of Catholic parents is the “real freedom in their choice of schools” – this is something that the faithful are asked to work for in conjunction with civil society (cf. canon 797).

The responsibilities incumbent on Bishops and Trustees of Catholic Schools (where applicable), from a canonical point of view, are contained in canons 793-806. They include the following:

- working to assist the parents in the education of their children (cf. canons 793-794; 796; 802);
- to work with Christ’s faithful in making sure that civil society acknowledges the freedom of parents to choose Catholic Schools and provides for education in accord with the conscience of the parents (cf. canons 793 §2; 797; 799);
- to make sure that Catholic Schools conform to the fundamental requirements of the Code (canon 803);
- to ensure that in all Catholic Schools religious instruction is taught and the teachers of religion are appointed in accordance with the criteria of the Code (canons 804-805);
- to exercise oversight of all the Catholic Schools in the diocese (canon 806 §1);
- to carry out an inspection of all Catholic Schools in the diocese (canon 806 §1);

- to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic Schools in the diocese (canon 806 §1);
- to work in partnership with those who are in charge of Catholic Schools to make sure that academic standards are as high in their schools as in other schools (canon 806 §2).

Many of the primary schools in Ireland were established by religious institutes to provide an education that was accessible to as many as possible in society. However, the majority of primary schools are vested in diocesan trusts.

THE BISHOP AS PATRON

The Bishop is the recognised patron of the Catholic school in his diocese.⁹ In that capacity, the Bishop has certain rights and responsibilities, particularly in relation to ethos, the appointment of the Board of Management, the appointment of Chairpersons, the appointment of staff, enrolment/admission policy, insurance and buildings.

Until recently, the following was the procedure for establishing a Catholic school:

- (a) A request to set up a school was made to the Department of Education & Skills by or on behalf of the local Bishop.
- (b) The parish was required by the State to provide the site for the school, free of charge.
- (c) The parish had to provide a portion of the building cost of the school.

Since January 1999, an alternative arrangement is possible in the case of new (including replacement) schools. The State may provide the site for the school as well as the

⁹ Education Act 1998 Section 8 (1)(a)

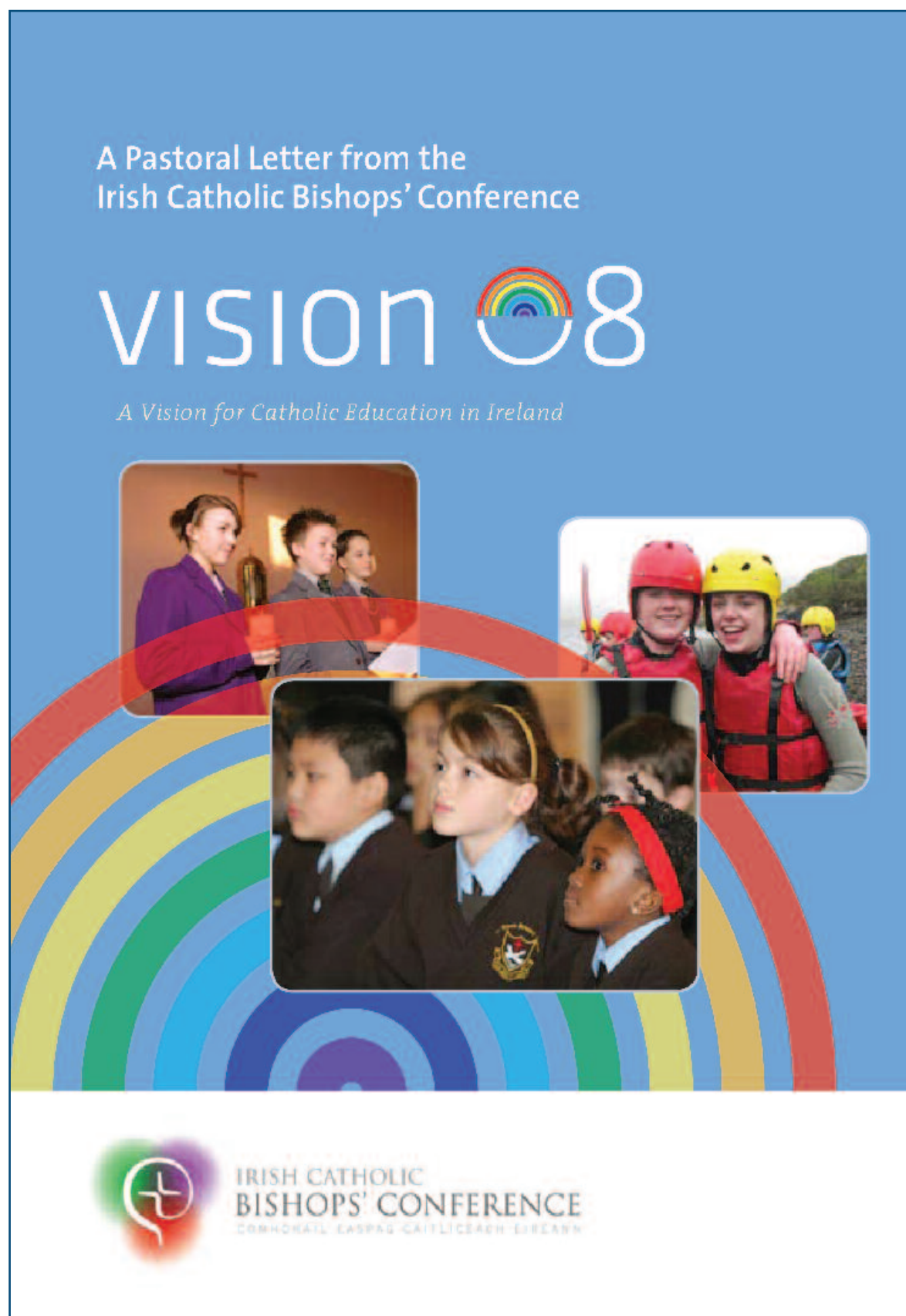
cost of building the school. The school will be owned by the State and leased to the patron for a defined period usually twenty five years.

Decisions about the arrangements to be entered into for new schools (including replacement schools) are the prerogative of the patron of the schools. Boards of Management should refer all such issues to the patron.

In appointing the Board of Management of the school, the Bishop delegates to the members certain responsibilities. Such delegation carries a duty of accountability by the Board of Management to the Bishop and to the Department of Education and Skills.

Subject to the approval of the Minister, the Bishop, as patron of the school, may at any time, resume the direct management of the school, or may nominate another manager to manage the school.

VISION 08: A VISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN IRELAND



A Pastoral Letter from the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference

VISION 8

A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland

Pentecost
May 2008



IRISH CATHOLIC
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS OF IRELAND

Vision 08 : A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland

The Catholic School in Ireland

Why this Pastoral now?



Education and, in particular, the role of the Catholic Church in education at all levels, has recently become a topic of intense discussion and debate in our country, both north and south. The urgency of such a debate has been heightened by the growing cultural and religious pluralism in our society. It is in this complex and challenging context that schools must operate. The context prompts new questions and calls for new answers to old ones. Why Catholic schools in modern Ireland? What is the special character of such schools? How do they contribute to society and the educational system of which they form such a significant part? It is against this background that we wish to set out our understanding of the nature and purpose of the Catholic school in Ireland today. In presenting this vision of the Catholic school, we wish to invite a response from those engaged with us in education.

“Catholic schools seek to reflect a distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education.”

Life Lived to the Full

While they share many characteristics with other schools in offering a public service, Catholic schools seek to reflect a distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education. This is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel sees the world in which we live as God's creation. As human persons, we are made in God's image and destined for everlasting life with God. Life is a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Jesus, who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14,6). He came among us so that, in his own words, we might 'have life and have it in all its fullness' (John 10,10).

What is entailed here is not only the fullest possible human flourishing in this world but a hope for the world to come. It means looking to the fullness of life with God which will never end and which makes sense of our whole human existence. It also means recognizing that eternal life is not 'an imaginary hereafter' but 'is present wherever God is loved and wherever his life reaches us'.

Catholic education aims to help each student to develop his or her full potential as a human being. It will do so by preparing and disposing our pupils for this fullness of life, by enabling them to be people who are fully alive. Education means the development of the whole person. An education which makes no room to address the fundamental questions about the meaning of life could not be described as seeking such holistic development. By educating students in their every dimension according to the Gospel, Catholic schools seek to transform not only the individual human lives of our pupils but also, through them, the wider society which



they will help to build. Catholic schools are part of the Church's continuing mission to carry the life-giving message of Christ to every generation. This gives strength and coherence to the Catholic Church's philosophy of education. For Christians, true human fulfilment and the redemption of society are to be found through faith in Jesus Christ and through service of others in imitation of him.

Catholic schools aspire to create an open, happy, stimulating, and mutually respectful community environment in which young people are able to develop the full range of their abilities and talents in a balanced, integrated and generous way. These schools seek to form pupils who will find true happiness and strive to give authentic leadership in society. They will do this through the Christian quality of their lives, the unselfish use of their gifts for the common good and their commitment to work for a more just, cohesive and caring human society.

Vision 68: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland

Faith the Foundation

In a climate of growing secularism, Catholic schools are distinguished by faith in the transcendent mystery of God as the source of all that exists and as the meaning of human existence. This faith is not simply the subject matter of particular lessons but forms the foundation of all that we do and the horizon of all that takes place in the school. The Catholic tradition of which the schools are a part has been continually enriched through centuries of reflection and development. This not only offers our pupils a rich heritage of wisdom but also gives them stability, a framework of meaning and a sense of direction for their lives in a time of rapid and often confusing cultural and social change.

Catholic education has always placed a high value on reason, both intellectual and practical. In continuity with the earliest traditions of the Church, it regards education and the cultivation of intellectual life as precious in themselves. It sees the use of rational thought and scientific analysis as essential to the advancement of technology and human progress. Therefore, scientific and technological studies are a very important part of education. However, it rejects those diminished and mechanistic notions of rationality which attempt to limit the concept of truth to what can be scientifically established and the concept of human progress to what can be technologically achieved. On the contrary, it believes a reasonable balance must always be maintained between the humanities and technology in education. Faith and reason must be seen as vibrant partners in the human quest for understanding and ultimate fulfilment which is pursued in Catholic schools.

“Catholic schools aspire to create an open, happy, stimulating, and mutually respectful community environment.”

Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland

Religious Education and Prayer

Specifically religious education, designed to confirm and deepen an understanding of the faith, forms an essential part of the curriculum in Catholic schools and functions at its core. This means, for example, that Catholic schools commit resources and time to religious education as a matter of priority.

By integrating their understanding of faith with their experience of the world as studied in other subjects, our pupils are helped to appropriate what they believe and respond to the exhortation of St Peter to be 'always ready to give answer to anyone who asks the reason for the hope which is in you' (1 Pet 3:15). At the same time, while respecting the autonomy of each branch of learning, they are helped to unify the diversity of subjects in the curriculum by seeing all of them in the light of faith and as different approaches to the study of a world 'charged with the grandeur of God' (G.M. Hopkins SJ).

Part of the overall pedagogy of Catholic schools involves helping pupils to grow in self-understanding and develop a language of prayer with which they can express the search for God which lies at the heart of human lives. Worship of God through prayer and the celebration of liturgy and the sacraments, 'the doors to the sacred', belongs at the very centre of the Catholic school's life. Such worship is rooted in faith and inspired by wonder at the transcendent mystery of God revealed in the complex beauty of the universe. It is fundamental to Catholic self-understanding to experience everyday realities as sacramental signs of God working in the world. This sacramental view helps pupils to see themselves as the stewards of God's creation and become aware of their ecological responsibility for nature and the environment.



Developing Human Persons

The Christian understanding of the human person includes the call to the fullness of life and eternal destiny (cf. John 10:10). The whole human person in this sense is the focus of the Catholic school's educational endeavour. Its mission is to help students to grow in confidence and self-esteem and to develop their humanity. It should lay foundations for life-long growth and hope, freed from ignorance and the other factors which can inhibit human flourishing. The promotion of a wide range of co-curricular activities within the school and the local community reflects this focus on the personal development of each pupil.

It is part of the mission of the Catholic school to provide sensitively and effectively for the needs of all its students. In a climate of trust and through the provision of skilled pastoral care, it aims to accompany them through the important experiences of their growing-up years. This accompaniment is particularly important at times of crisis and loss, or when dealing with failure. In this way students are supported through current difficulties and prepared for the challenges of adult life.

“Worship of God through prayer and the celebration of liturgy and the sacraments, ‘the doors to the sacred’, belongs at the very centre of the Catholic school’s life.”

Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland

“Catholic education is inspired by the Gospel and, as such, respects the freedom and dignity of every human being.”

In the Catholic school there is a strong commitment to pupils for whom the traditional methods of education are a challenge. This means, for example, that those who are educationally disadvantaged and those with special needs are actively supported in achieving their full potential. This demands additional resources. Increases in public provision towards meeting these needs and thus enhancing opportunity and educational outcomes are a welcome step forward.

Education for Living

Catholic education is inspired by the Gospel and, as such, respects the freedom and dignity of every human being. It teaches students to recognize the difference between right and wrong in their personal lives and in their relations with others. It tries to develop each one's capacity to reflect on and respond to the often difficult and complex moral issues which confront us as individuals and as a society. It does this in the light of the Gospel and the rich tradition of Catholic principles concerning respect for life, personal fidelity, justice, truthfulness and integrity of conscience. A central part of the endeavour of the Catholic school is to inculcate in pupils the qualities of personal integrity and moral courage which are marks of an authentic Christian personality. Catholic teachers will encourage their students to see their abilities as being for the benefit of others and not just themselves. They are called to serve others, above all those who are victims of poverty and injustice of any kind.

This approach to education also includes growth in realistic knowledge, love and acceptance of ourselves, and an understanding of the world we live in. This is a world where conflicting forces and values operate in human society, a world where there is great goodness and where there are great virtues and great achievements, but where there are also unjust structures produced by human sinfulness, and where human lives are diminished as a result. All of us, individuals, communities, institutions,



including the Church itself, can be complicit in this. The challenge remains to commit ourselves anew to live out the ideals of Catholic education in the day to day life of schools, so that our pupils may act with justice and integrity in an imperfect world when they are adults themselves.

Education in a Time of Transition

We are acutely conscious of the shortcomings of some of our educational institutions in the past. However, that should not make us forget those parents and dedicated educators who, for generations worked under the most difficult conditions with very few resources and often with little assistance from public funds. We are thinking here of the priests, religious and lay people who taught in and staffed our schools, acted as trustees, managers or in other capacities with great generosity and for very little reward. Despite such difficulties and limitations, they managed to provide an education to generations of children who would otherwise have been deprived of it.

Over time the Church in Ireland has been able to engage in different ways with the State in the provision of schooling at all levels. It is now forty years since universal post primary schooling was made available to the young people of the Republic of Ireland with the introduction, in 1967, of free education and, where necessary, school transport. The Catholic secondary

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school was to the fore in enabling the success of this initiative, with 95% of these schools changing from being fee-paying and entering the free scheme. Equally, in Northern Ireland, the provision of post-primary schooling for all in grammar and secondary schools was achieved in no small part through great sacrifice on the part of parishes and communities. Much of the recent economic success of our island can be attributed to the way in which our schools have built on this inheritance.

With the number of priests and religious involved in educational leadership and in education as a whole currently in decline, many religious congregations are now engaged, in some instances through collaboration with other congregations, in the process of exploring, planning and setting up new forms of trusteeship. By these means, some or all responsibility for the schools they formerly administered will be transferred to trusts made up wholly or partly of lay people. The decision to do this springs from the belief that Catholic education is the responsibility of the whole Catholic faith community¹. As the rich legacy of the past is entrusted to a rising generation of highly professional and dedicated lay leadership, the moment is ripe for such a transition.



Education for Excellence

In current circumstances Catholic schools continue to meet the challenge of seeking educational excellence, while resisting the pressures of merely pragmatic, utilitarian approaches which tend to subordinate the good of the person to lesser ends. We believe that over-emphasis on competition, a too narrow preoccupation with examinations and specialising at too early an age on highly specific courses are inimical to true education. We are convinced that our Catholic schools can best contribute to the wellbeing of the educational system as a whole by the pursuit of genuine excellence while remaining faithful to our distinctive vision and approach. The provision of skilled professional educators, informed and committed to a Catholic ethos, is an essential part of this contribution.

Education and the Community

While carefully facilitating the emergence of each pupil's unique individuality, Catholic schools recognize that 'education can be carried out authentically only in a relational and community context'². We see the school as an extension of the community of the family, reflecting and supporting the values of Catholic family life and respecting the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. At the same time the school exists consciously within the community of the Church. Understanding the demands of social justice and the common good, we also wish to function within the wider human community for which the Church exists and in which our pupils are called to live and serve with their God-given talents.

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“Education is ... the way in which the various overlapping communities ... initiate us into the richness of a shared life and heritage.”

It is communities which educate. Education is, to a very significant extent, the way in which the various overlapping communities to which we belong as human beings – the family first of all – initiate us into the richness of a shared life and heritage. Education enables us to enter into the community's experience and knowledge, its history and culture, its values and faith. The State can and should facilitate communities in their educational task but must always recognize that the task belongs first of all to the families and communities of which we are part. Education can never be reduced to becoming simply a process by which the State seeks to produce good citizens, or by which the economy sets out to provide productive contributors to the wealth of society, or even by which science aspires to enlighten students about the wonderful new knowledge it has acquired. All these are undoubtedly part of the process but education is always about more than any of them and is concerned with the whole person and the community to which each person belongs.

Catholic schools aspire to be themselves warmly participative communities. The school community comprises not only pupils/students and teaching staff but also parents, ancillary staff, board members and others who may be associated with the school. In particular, the school seeks to invite the fullest possible collaboration of parents and to empower and assist Catholic families in their task of handing

on the faith to their children⁸. Catholic schools also have a concern for the ongoing professional development of their staffs and the training and formation of their board members. Commitment to the personal and professional nurture of all school personnel is an essential element in building the school community.

Parish Schools and the School as a Community Partnership

In many parts of Ireland the community of the parish continues to act as a centre of Catholic religious education, worship and liturgical celebration for those whom it serves. The great strength of the Catholic primary school system in Ireland has been its rootedness in parish communities, where the school commands the support and loyalty of the families involved. The primary school is an integral part of the local community in many areas and itself plays a unique role in community building. It provides a focus where families meet and get to know each other, and around which they are united by a shared interest in the welfare of their children. It gives the local community a sense of ownership of the educational enterprise and a corresponding commitment to ensure that the enterprise flourishes and succeeds.



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“We look forward to a fruitful dialogue about the best way of ensuring that our schools can develop in the coming decades.”

Efforts are being made to develop a stronger collaborative partnership between the school, the parish and the local community by means of such structures as boards of management (or governors) in the governance of schools. In primary schools in particular, initiatives in faith formation, the sacramental preparation of pupils, and after school programmes in schools (for example, ‘Do This in Memory’, Early Start, Summer Schools, Home School Link projects), are of increasing service to the parish and the wider community. These initiatives are examples of inter-agency partnerships which are for the good of pupils, their families and the community as a whole.

An Inclusive Community

Catholic education values tolerance and inclusiveness. In an increasingly multicultural society, it is open to generous dialogue with Christians of other traditions and those of other faiths and none, while remaining true to its own distinctive ethos. Catholic schools are open to children of all denominations. The presence of children from other denominations is seen as an enrichment of the educational experience offered by the school and as a practical expression of the commitment to inclusivity⁶. Indeed, Catholic schools are to the fore in welcoming the ‘New Irish’ in both primary and post-primary schools on this island. The schools see such diversity as offering opportunities for deeper understanding among people holding diverse convictions. They also promote the common good of society as a whole.

The School and Society

The Catholic school seeks to enable our pupils to take their full place in society, to engage in dialogue with contemporary culture and to serve the world to the best of their ability⁷. Dialogue with culture is an essential aspect of living the faith in every age, but our students must also learn to preserve the necessary critical distance from

those features of the surrounding culture which may be opposed to true human flourishing and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which invites us to life in all its fullness.

A Catholic Education Service

It is the Bishops’ intention to provide in cooperation with the Religious Trustees further support in the near future for those involved in the work of Catholic education by establishing a national Catholic Education Service for the whole of Ireland. The protection of a Catholic school’s ethos is both a moral duty and a legal responsibility of the Bishop as Patron/Trustee, but this is not in conflict with the need to value the freedom of conscience and proper role of each member of the school community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we look forward to a fruitful dialogue about the best way of ensuring that our schools can develop in the coming decades. We are convinced that this can only happen on the sure foundation of remaining faithful to the Gospel we serve while, at the same time, ‘scrutinizing the signs of the times’⁸, as these signs emerge in the needs and demands of the larger national and international community to which we belong. In this way, in conversation with all our partners in education, we will ensure that the structures, and the schools themselves, remain effective, relevant and true to an authentic vision of the Catholic school, such as we have tried to set it out in this brief letter.

References

1. In the second century, St Irenaeus wrote that 'the glory of God is the human person fully alive' (Against the Heresies IV.20.7).
2. BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 31.
3. *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People – Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Vatican II, Pt.5; Lay Catholics in Schools. Witness to Faith Pt.4, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, Rome.
4. *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful* #12 Congregation for Catholic Education (2007).
5. 'The Church, recognising that parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, strives to assist them in this task. While all parents have both the duty and the right to educate their children, Catholic parents have also the duty and the right to choose schools that can best promote the Catholic education of their children' (Can 793) (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2007, Catholic Primary School, A Policy for Provision into The Future, Veritas Dublin).
6. *Building Peace, Shaping the Future* (Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, 2007, Armagh).
7. *Gaudium et Spes: The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* 27.
8. *Gaudium et Spes: The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* 22.

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NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF CATECHESIS IN IRELAND

Extracts from Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, 'Children's Religious Education in School' (pp. 140–8); 'Faith Development in Catholic Schools' (pp. 204–10), copyright © Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010; published 2010 by Veritas Publications, Dublin.

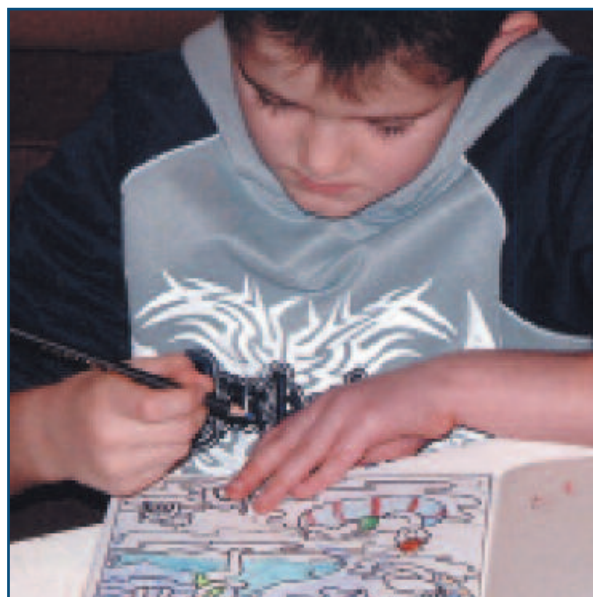
SHARE THE GOOD NEWS (EXTRACTS)

Children's Religious Education in School

99. Primary schools seek to launch children on their lifelong journey with an education that honours them personally and helps them to develop and use their affective, active and cognitive learning capacities. Heart, hands and head all have a role to play in how we learn and what we learn. Religious education for children necessitates such a synthesis between heart, hands and head. At the same time, it contributes to ensuring that the education children receive is holistic, experiential and life enhancing.

Religious Education takes place in primary schools in Ireland within circumstances supported by Education Acts in both jurisdictions.²⁰ A Core Syllabus for Religious Education in Northern Ireland, drawn up by the four major churches – Church of Ireland,

Presbyterian, Methodist and Roman Catholic – and negotiated with the Department of Education, Northern Ireland, became compulsory in 1996. The Revised Core Syllabus for Religious Education, again prepared by the four main churches, was published by the Department in June 2007.²¹ This syllabus is continuous from primary through post-primary school education. It sets out Religious Education subject matter for Key Stages 1-4. It provides a common core for the teaching of Religious Education, which schools are free to build on in a way that suits the needs of their pupils and the ethos of the school. The Code of Practice, Northern Ireland (1998), which guides special education, emphasises the value of children's spiritual development, stating that 'every child attending either a mainstream or special school must receive religious education and attend collective worship, unless this would be against the wishes of the parents or the pupil's statement indicates otherwise'.²²



²⁰ See Government of Ireland, Education Act, 1998 (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1998); for Northern Ireland see the Education Reform Act, 1988 and the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order, 1989.

²¹ Revised Core Syllabus for Religious Education. Available from www.deni.gov.uk

²² Code of Practice, Northern Ireland (1998), p. 47.

In the Republic of Ireland, primary school religious education, focused on the formation of children within their faith community is understood as coming within the remit of the various faith communities. These, in turn, provide both syllabuses and programmes for religious education and formation in their schools. The Education Act, 1998 confirms the requirement that schools 'promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students...in consultation with their parents, having regard for the characteristic spirit of the school'.²³ The spiritual and moral aspects of education have been confirmed as fundamental to education and to fostering maturity in all young people. In fact, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, in its general definition of education, calls for education in all schools to 'contribute to the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development'.²⁴

The Introduction to the revised Primary School Curriculum for the Irish Republic acknowledges and values the contribution of religious education as one of the curriculum areas in primary schools: 'In seeking to develop the full potential of the individual, the curriculum takes into account the child's affective, spiritual, moral and religious needs.'²⁵ Religious education and formation has always been considered in Ireland to be of the utmost importance for this age group.²⁶ The Irish State continues this tradition by recognising the role

My Shepherd is the Lord



of Christian denominations and other faith traditions in designing curricula for religious education in the schools they manage and in supervising its teaching and implementation.²⁷ As an outreach of the local parish, Catholic primary schools seek to encourage the young people belonging to the parish, or other local parishes, to grow and develop in their faith.

100. Catholic primary schools in the Republic and in Northern Ireland are required to follow a

²³ Government of Ireland, *Education Act, 1998*, 9 (d); for background see K. Williams, *Faith and the Nation: Religion, Culture and Schooling in Ireland* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2005).

²⁴ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, *A Programme for Reform: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Towards the New Century*, 1993, p. 26.

²⁵ Ireland, Department of Education and Science, *Primary School Curriculum: Introduction* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1999), p. 58.

²⁶ See *Rules for National Schools Under the Department of Education* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1965), Rule 68.

²⁷ See Ireland, Department of Education and Science, *Primary School Curriculum: Introduction*, p. 58.

religious education and formation programme that fosters and deepens children's Catholic faith. Any new syllabus/curriculum, and programmes arising from it, will continue to follow this approach. Efforts to involve children in a creative mix of affective, active and cognitive learning, suited to their age and development, as well as to the varying levels of family participation in faith-based activities, are to be welcomed.

Previous models, highlighted in different ways down through the centuries, should be integrated: the doctrinal approach (learning the teaching of the Church); the kerygmatic approach (focused on coming to know and love Jesus Christ); and the anthropological approach (taking into account the circumstances and experience of the learner). The positive effects of a more recent 'pastoral' model are also becoming evident: a deeper awareness of the connections between home, parish and school; a vision of the parish community as a catechetical community; recognition of the ongoing need for the spiritual care of all educators, parents/guardians, teachers, parish ministers; and greater sharing of ideas, responsibilities and resources at diocesan and parish levels.

As well as pupil texts, a significant teacher's manual, videos, posters, workbooks and material for use at home and in the parish are all to be considered helpful. The six fundamental tasks of catechesis, identified in the General Directory for Catechesis, and

discussed in Chapter 2 above, should be at the centre of the programme: promoting knowledge of the faith; liturgical education; moral formation; teaching to pray; education for community life (including the ecumenical dimension); and missionary initiation (including inter-religious dialogue).²⁸

In the religious education of children, co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong. There is common agreement that the dominant faith development issues during childhood are belonging and being cherished.²⁹ 'It is communities which educate... Education enables us to enter into the community's experience and knowledge, its history and culture, its values and faith.'³⁰ In later childhood, the child 'begins to take on for him - or herself the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolise belonging to his or her community'.³¹ All school-based education, and every school whatever its ethos, should respect and support the faith of the children under their care.

101. All primary schools fall under the obligation, identified by the Departments of Education, North and South, to contribute to the moral, spiritual and religious development of the child. The religious education and formation that takes place in the primary school does so within the particular ethos or defined characteristic spirit of that school. Such ethos is evident in the belief system, values, spirit

²⁸ In recent years the *Children of God* series, and its re-presentation *Alive-O*, has provided schools with such a programme. The *Alive-O* series has, in fact, led to significant interdenominational and cross border discussion, which has provided a new coherence in what is offered in a wide range of Catholic and other schools, based on an underlying affirmation of the value of supporting and nurturing the Christian faith of children. An Irish-language edition, *Beo go Deo*, is available, as is a Scottish edition. The Church of Ireland Education Board, together with the Methodist and Presbyterian Boards of Education, has developed the *Follow Me* series based on *Alive-O*.

²⁹ See J. W. Berryman, 'Faith Development and the Language of Faith', D. E. Ratcliff (ed.), *Handbook of Children's Religious Education* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1992), p. 41.

³⁰ Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Vision '08*, p. 7.

³¹ J. W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 149.

and attitudes that are encouraged across the whole school. Ethos is not simply an aspiration; it is a reality, whether carefully defined or not, that shapes behaviour, decision-making and style of relationship within the education community and beyond.

Every school belongs within a community. Parents and the community share their traditions and values with their young people through their school. The Catholic primary school is identifiable by its Catholic ethos. It 'models and transmits a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ'.³² The whole school is rooted in and moved by the Gospel values of respect for life, love, solidarity, truth and justice. The Catholic school promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person, made in God's image and uniquely loved by God. It welcomes, is respectful of, and engages with, people of all beliefs.³³ The Catholic primary school defines itself in relation to the local Christian community, of which it is an essential part. It builds on 'the foundation of love and faith which parents nurture at home'.³⁴ Catholic primary schools in the Irish Republic operate under the Schedule, agreed with the Minister for Education, reproduced below.

AGREED SCHEDULE FOR A CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

A Roman Catholic school (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including living relationship with God and other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

Catholic Primary School Managers' Association, 'Deeds of Variation for Catholic Primary Schools', CPSMA Members' Handbook, p. 29. Available from www.cpsma.ie/publications

The contribution of the Board of Management, principal, teachers and other staff in witnessing to the Catholic ethos of a school cannot be overestimated. The Board of Management ensures a spirit of partnership with the patron and trustees, parents and children, school staff and the parish community.³⁵ Religious education is provided for Catholic pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church, seeking always to confirm and deepen their experience of lived Christian faith.

³² Catholic Primary School Management Association, *Management Board Members' Handbook* (Dublin: Veritas, 2007), p. 7

³³ See the Northern Commission for Catholic Education, *Catholic Education: The Vision* (Belfast, 2006), p. 3.

³⁴ Northern Ireland, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, *The Catholic School* (1992).

³⁵ See Mater Dei Institute of Education and Catholic Primary School Management Association, *Wellsprings: Workshop Participants Booklet* (Dublin: Veritas, 2008), pp. 13-15. Also available from <http://wellsprings.materdei.ie>



Prayer is a feature of the school day and celebrations of the sacraments are a regular part of the school community's life. Interaction during the Religion period should be respectful and supportive of students of other religions, too. The Catholic school promotes tolerance, respect and inclusiveness. Its educational perspective is Catholic and ecumenical by nature and open to inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogues. It promotes 'the formation of young people in the construction of a world based on dialogue and the search for community ... on the mutual acceptance of differences rather than on their opposition'.³⁶ All students should be encouraged to have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith and its traditions, and also of other faith communities.

On the other hand, no pupil need receive, or be present at, any religious education of which her or his parents or guardians disapprove. Timetabling should be arranged to allow easy withdrawal.³⁷

In today's world, with so much movement of peoples, Catholic schools should have great clarity about this issue:

Catholic schools must not renounce their own characteristics and Christian-oriented educational programmes when immigrants' children of another religion are accepted. Parents wishing to enrol their children should be clearly informed of this. At the same time no pupil must be compelled to take part in a Catholic liturgy or to perform actions contrary to his or her religious convictions.³⁸

The Catholic primary school, usually under the patronage of a bishop and attached to a parish, works closely with the local Catholic faith community, and in particular with the priest and the local Faith Development Coordinator, who visit the school regularly in a supportive role. The connection between school and parish is in this way acknowledged and reinforced day by day. A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community, recognising the dignity and value of every human person.³⁹ Where parents/guardians of children, other than Catholic children, attending the school, wish to provide suitable faith education for their children, the school principal will be happy to encourage them in this regard.⁴⁰

³⁶ ETCS 53.

³⁷ See *Rules for National Schools Under the Department of Education*, Rule 69.

³⁸ EMCC 62.

³⁹ See *Catholic Primary School Management Association, Management Board Members' Handbook*, p. 8.

⁴⁰ See *Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future* (Dublin: Veritas, 2007), 4.3.

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN IRELAND

- Catholic education is inspired by Jesus Christ. It is person-centred, seeking to develop the full potential of each person.
- Catholic education proposes a sacramental view of reality, helping pupils to see God ‘in the bits and pieces of everyday life’.
- Catholic education takes place in open, happy, stimulating and mutually respectful communities.
- Catholic education values intellectual and practical reason, promoting dialogue and understanding between faith, tradition, culture and heritage.
- Catholic education values tolerance and inclusiveness. Catholic schools welcome pupils of other traditions, faiths and none, seeing diversity as offering opportunities for deeper understanding among people holding diverse convictions.
- Catholic education seeks to enable pupils to act with integrity and justice, in pursuit of the common good in an imperfect world, and to act as stewards of creation.

Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Vision '08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland – Executive Summary.

TO DO: CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY REVIEW

Board of Management, principal, staff and parents engage in regular review of how the school community lives up to its Catholic ethos. Consider:

- Description of ethos
- Mission Statement
- Connection with local parish(es)
- RE Policy
- Pastoral Care
- SPHE and RSE Policy
- Provision for liturgy and reflective space
- In-service in these areas
- Parents' Council

102. As well as contributing to the religious education of children, the Catholic primary school, as an outreach of the local Catholic parish, plays a very significant role in the Christian initiation of Catholic children as they grow into fuller participation in their local Christian community.

The Catholic school, in conjunction with its parish, and other local parishes, helps prepare its Catholic pupils for the reception of the sacraments of initiation. This takes place at the behest of the parents/guardians, with their cooperation and in partnership with their parish community.

In general, teachers in the Catholic primary-school sector participate willingly and generously in the faith formation of Catholic pupils.⁴¹ Complaints arise from time to time that primary teachers experience themselves as

⁴¹ See Irish National Teachers' Organisation, *Teaching Religion in the Primary School*, (Dublin: INTO Publications, 2003) pp. 43-55.

isolated in the sacramental preparation of children, being left to cater for this alone, without the input of parents/guardians, and sometimes with the minimum of interest from the parish too.⁴² Such misconstruction, or even abandoning, of roles should not be allowed to develop. Where it is observed, it should be corrected.

The school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round.



The diocese, as part of its Faith Development Services, provides support for schools in both the religious education and the preparation for sacramental initiation of Catholic pupils. It does this through its Primary Diocesan Adviser(s) for Religious Education, who visits schools, supporting school principals and providing in-service and resources for teachers and chaplains.

These advisers often make themselves available also to support parish programmes for parents/guardians and their children as they

prepare to receive the sacraments. The diocesan Education Office, a further element within the Faith Development Services of the diocese, facilitates the management and smooth running of the Catholic schools, under the patronage of the local bishop.

In Catholic primary schools, it is the role of the school **Principal** on behalf of the Board of Management to facilitate a consistent and coordinated approach to religious education, appropriate to the school's ethos, and to oversee the school's contribution to the Christian initiation of its Catholic pupils. Those training for principalship in a Catholic school today and those already in position need to be offered in-depth and continuing formation on what is meant by Catholic leadership in the complex world in which we live. It is appropriate that a teacher with specific training be given a post of responsibility as **Religious Education Coordinator**. Their role is to coordinate the religious education activities of the other teachers within the school, not to relieve them of their responsibilities, and in particular to support and resource teachers whose pupils are preparing for reception of the sacraments of initiation. The Principal and/or the Religious Education Coordinator should be in on-going communication with the local Faith Development Coordinator and visiting priest, so that parish, home and school preparation is linked and cooperative. Trainee teachers who wish to work in Catholic schools will have participated in modules at College that will help them to become aware of and engage with religious education and formation, Catholic teaching, the Catholic school, Catholic sacramental initiation, and appropriate means of supporting the faith of Catholic pupils.

⁴² See Irish National Teachers' Organisation, *Teaching Religion in the Primary School*, pp. 54-5.



As part of their training, student teachers should also be encouraged to participate in faith development initiatives suitable for their own spiritual needs, as suggested in Chapter 4. School boards of management should seek to support and facilitate individuals and groups of teachers in taking initiatives designed to help them to engage with their own on-going faith development.

A practical difficulty arises when the Catholic pupils in a school come from a variety of parishes. The parishes, along with the parents/guardians, should take a leading role in preparing for the celebration of the sacraments, and they should expect the children from the parish to be initiated normally within their own parish community.

Parents and parish personnel should ensure that children already feel they belong to their parish, and know the other children, so that it is natural for them to celebrate their First Communion within their own parish community and in their own parish church.

103. The Catholic Church accepts, given the pluralism of religious belief that exists in

Ireland today, that there should be choice and diversity within the national education system: 'In new areas of population it is incumbent upon the State to plan for the provision of school sites and to ensure, in consultation with the various patron bodies, that there is a plurality of school provision reflecting the wishes of the parents in the area.'⁴³ It may also be desirable for the Catholic Church to enter into new patronage arrangements, providing such arrangements uphold the rights of Catholic parents/guardians, in relation to the religious education and formation of their children within the school curriculum.⁴⁴

Parents/guardians of Catholic children attending schools other than Catholic schools must, as is always the case, take responsibility for the catechetical formation of their children and give particular attention, with the support of their parish, to the preparation of their young people for the sacraments of initiation.⁴⁵ As well as the catechesis they give at home, they are asked to ensure that they provide for their children's participation in a full sacramental preparation programme, before putting their children forward for sacramental initiation in their parish.

Together with parents/guardians, the local parish will take responsibility for the pastoral care of students in a Catholic special needs school in the parish. Even though students will attend such a school from a wide catchment area, the parish, with the support of parents/guardians and teachers, will seek to include the students whenever possible in parish activities. Preparation for the sacraments by children with special educational needs who do not attend Catholic schools will require particular and individual attention.

⁴³ Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future*, 5.1.

⁴⁴ See Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future*, 5.2.

⁴⁵ See CIC cann. 773, 776, 777, 798, 804.

PRESENTING THE GOSPEL TO ADOLESCENTS



Nourishing the Faith of Adolescents

104. The General Directory for Catechesis affirms that young people are to be embraced as active participants in their own religious development, bringing the message of Christ out into the world: 'young people cannot be considered only objects of catechesis, but also active subjects and protagonists of evangelisation and artisans of social renewal.'⁴⁶

Adolescence, the stage between childhood and adulthood, is characterised by physical change and a search for identity. Of its nature, this transition time will involve a degree of uncertainty. Rapid social change is also central to what is happening in the life of the adolescent. The need to become independent and self affirming, before taking on adult responsibilities, is crucial.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



145. An open and respectful approach to religion and its contribution in shaping our daily lives is a necessary component of every school community. Good religious education, strong pastoral care and effective chaplaincy support are essential for the holistic development of the young. The Board of Management of the Catholic school is responsible for the development of the school on behalf of the Patron/Trustees, with the support of management bodies such as the Catholic Primary School Managers Association and the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools. It appoints teachers and principals to the school, sets priorities and ensures the resourcing of its approved projects. School mission statements and policies, approved by the Board of Management, should reflect a transparently open approach to the established ethos of the school, to its young people themselves and to their religious tradition, experience and beliefs. The Principal and Deputy Principal, the Head of the Religious Education Department (Post-Primary), the Coordinator of Religious Education (Primary),

⁴⁶ GDC 183.

and where possible the Coordinator of Chaplaincy Services and the Coordinator of Pastoral Care in a school, as well as others in leadership roles, should be carefully considered positions, supported, as a priority, by ongoing education and training.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES IN RELATION TO SCHOOLING

146. Schools Objective 1: The members of the Catholic Church in Ireland will contribute energetically to developing a holistic understanding of education in school.

Some Indicators of Achievement

- Catholic parents/guardians will be encouraged in their role as the first educators of their children in their religious growth and development.
- Parents who choose to send their children to a Catholic primary or post-primary school will be aware of, understand and support the school's Catholic ethos.
- Catholic leadership at all levels, local, diocesan and national, with the support of the faithful, will give high priority to maintaining and developing Catholic schooling, ensuring that the specific responsibilities of the Catholic Church as Patron of schools, in partnership with the State as the main provider of education, are honoured.
- The national Catholic Education Service for the whole of Ireland, instigated by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious in Ireland in 2008, will oversee partnership within the Catholic schools sector.

147. Schools Objective 2: The Catholic school will operate according to a Mission Statement and Ethos Policy that openly reflects its Catholic spirit.

Some Indicators of Achievement

- The mission and objectives of each Catholic school will be developed, in conformity with its traditions, through partnership between the Patrons/Trustee bodies, Board of Management, principal, teachers and parents/guardians.
- The mission and objectives of the Catholic school will be based on Gospel values, respect for each individual and for the common good, and a commitment to the search for truth and the development of the whole person.
- There will be an awareness on the part of all involved in a Catholic school that they are contributing to the promotion of a particular educational experience, founded upon a Catholic anthropology of the person, vision of society, understanding of teaching and learning and of knowledge itself.
- The Catholic primary school, as an outreach of the local parish, will seek to nourish the faith of its Catholic students and assist in their Christian initiation. It will respect the religious tradition of other students and facilitate them in every way.



- In a Catholic post-primary school, the educational needs, including religious education needs, of all will be given priority. The faith of Catholic students will be informed and supported.
- School policies will reflect the openly Catholic atmosphere of the school.
- Alternative models for Catholic schools, which seek to meet the needs of a wide diversity of pupils, will be encouraged.

Where there are special benefits to a local community, an interdenominational school may be sponsored in conjunction with other Christian denominations.

RENEWED VISION: RE-EXAMINING THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Our Catholic schools have been the result of huge generosity and commitment on the part of thousands of people over generations. Education was provided for millions when the State could not or would not provide it. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to these people – lay, religious and clergy. But we have to re-examine what role our schools can play in an increasingly pluralist society. When we see how much faithbased schools are in demand in most other countries, we must ensure that we are offering a Catholic education to all and not just a good secular education for ethnic Catholics.

And we are committed to resisting the pressures that would seek to replace education of the whole person with little more than job training.

Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Building Faith in Young People, p. 10.

148. Schools Objective 3: The Catholic school, primary or postprimary, will be characterised by respect, generosity, justice, hospitality and critical reflection.

Some Indicators of Achievement

- Catholic schools will be known to be open to pupils from all cultural and religious backgrounds.
- The Catholic school, utterly respectful of everyone's belief system, will invite all those who participate in its education system (teachers and parents/guardians as well as students) to know, understand and honour the characteristic spirit within which it builds its education community.
- Recognising and responding to the educational needs of all children, the Catholic school will exercise an option for justice, especially for the poor and disadvantaged.
- The Catholic school will contribute to the future of the Church and of society by developing an informed, critically reflective pupil and teacher body.

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION: THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL, OPEN TO ALL

The Catholic school's public role is very clearly perceived. It has not come into being as a private initiative, but as an expression of the reality of the Church, having by its very nature a public character. It fulfils a public usefulness and, although clearly and decidedly configured in the perspective of the Catholic faith, is not reserved to Catholics only, but is open to all those who appreciate and share its qualified educational project.

CSTTM 16.

149. Schools Objective 4: The Board of Management in a Catholic school will take responsibility, on behalf of the Patron/Trustees, for developing the school, overseeing its Catholic ethos, and supporting the Principal in the daily management of the school, according to that ethos.

Some Indicators of Achievement

- The Board of Management of a Catholic school will take on the role of overseeing the provision of a clearly defined mission statement, codes and policies reflecting the Catholic ethos and characteristic spirit of the school.
- The Principal and staff of the school will be actively supported by the Board of Management in providing an atmosphere in the school commensurate with its open and respectful Catholic ethos.
- Initial training courses for boards of management will include a specific section on understanding Catholic ethos and its implications for decision-making.
- Board of Management members will have an opportunity, at least once a year, to review issues related to the Catholic ethos in the school and to report on this to the Patron.



150. Schools Objective 5: The Principal will ensure that the decisions of the Board of Management, and particularly the ethos statement set out by the Board, are lived out in the day-to-day running of the school.

Some Indicators of Achievement

- The Principal of a Catholic school will be employed on the understanding that he or she is delegated by the Board of Management and has responsibility to encourage, develop and promote the ethos associated with that particular Catholic school.
- Arrangements will be made for the provision of courses/modules in the management of Catholic schools. In-career support for those who are already in position will also be provided.
- The school Principal in a Catholic school, at the behest of the Board of Management, will take responsibility for providing suitable occasions for reflection on the spiritual and religious well-being of the school community. Retreat days for students, with appropriately trained retreat teams, will take place at frequent intervals.

151. Schools Objective 6: Staff in a Catholic school will know, understand and sustain the Catholic ethos within which they are employed.

Some Indicators of Achievement

- The teaching staff of a Catholic School will be actively involved in promoting the Mission Statement and policies approved by the Board of Management.
- Teachers will be employed on the understanding that they will commit themselves actively to supporting the ethos of the school. At the same time, the school will respect the freedom of conscience of

teachers in matters of personal religious belief and practice.

- New teachers, as part of their induction to the school, will have an opportunity to focus on the Catholic character of the school.
- School staff will take the opportunity to review some aspects of the Catholic ethos of the school at least once a year.

FOCUS GROUP: THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS SPIRITUAL LEADER

The next generation of principals will need to generate new expressions that inspire, teach, captivate and support the faith in schools. This will require new skills at an intellectual and a human level. Principals will need a more explicit understanding of the philosophical, theological and spiritual underpinnings of Catholic education, and also to develop skills that help teachers, parents and students grasp the importance and challenge of the Christian message in a way that is appropriate to their development.

D. Tuohy, M. Maume and R. Maxwell, Beyond Nostalgia: Issues In Trusteeship with Regard to The Catholic Ethos of Post-Primary Schools (Portlaoise: Presentation Ministries Office, 2000), p. 66.

152. Schools Objective 7: Religious education and faith formation will be evident strengths in the schooling provided by a Catholic school.

Some Indicators of Achievement

- Religious Education will be one of the crucial elements supporting the characteristic spirit of a Catholic school. Trained Diocesan Advisers for Religious Education will support the Principal and those teaching Religious Education, encouraging and resourcing the school in supporting and informing the faith of Catholic students.

- The Catholic school will establish and maintain strong contact with local Catholic parishes. A nominated member of the school staff will coordinate school input into celebrations of sacramental initiation in the local parish.
- The Catholic primary school, as part of the parish community and with that community, will assist parents/guardians in providing sacramental initiation support for children. School and parish programmes will be coordinated, with the help of parents/guardians, in such a way that home, parish and school develop and maintain close co-operation in the preparation of children for sacramental initiation.
- Teachers of Religious Education in post-primary schools will be fully trained specialist teachers. Religious educators working in a Catholic second-level school, as well as having responsibility for the religious education of all students, will be acknowledged as having a faith formation responsibility to their Catholic students.
- The Bishops' Guidelines for Junior Cycle (1999) and Senior Cycle Religious Education (2006) will be adopted, and a Religious Education Policy will be put in place as recommended in the Bishops' document on such policies (2003).
- Religious Education as a subject will be embraced with Catholic students from a Catholic perspective, and discussed with other students from their perspective. An approach that only speaks of the phenomenon of religion, rather than the students' experience of faith, will be considered insufficient in a Catholic school.

STARTING POINT: BALANCING FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The challenge of the future will clearly lie in defining the place of faith development in the schools, balancing the needs of preevangelisation, evangelisation and faith support for the school community, and linking the school with the faith life of the Church.

Beyond Nostalgia, pp. 64-5.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SHARE THE GOOD NEWS:

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP (CSP) A PROCESS FOR CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(A process for understanding, supporting and taking ownership of the characteristic spirit in a Catholic school)

Article contributed by Rev. Michael Drumm [CSP]

Background

There has been much media comment in recent years about the future of Catholic primary schools. Research undertaken by the CSP has found that those involved in schools often feel left out of these conversations as if their voice doesn't matter. This is an unacceptable situation because nothing is more important in a local area than its schools. At four regional assemblies held by the CSP in May/June 2011 in Knock, Kells, Dublin and Adare there was strong support for continuing the conversation about the future of Catholic primary schools at a more local level. This document is intended to facilitate a local continuation of the work that has been underway at a national level for the past two years. This national process included research undertaken by CSP and the publication of a Position Paper all of which are available at www.catholicschools.ie.

Understanding the characteristic spirit of the Catholic school

Those associated with Catholic schools often say that they know they are Catholic but are not good at explaining what it entails. They can point to their Catholic ethos but find it hard to articulate what exactly it is. Today, all schools find themselves in difficult circumstances due to enormous social, cultural and economic changes. In an age dominated by media and

information technology, significant new pressures are brought to bear on children, on family structures, on religious practice, on employment and, not least, on behaviour in the school classroom. In this new cultural context every Catholic school needs to reclaim its identity so that it is not just reacting to the latest trend or fashion but that it can truly articulate its self-understanding. The process we present in this document is intended to help you as a school community to do exactly this.

The proposed process

The CSP proposes the following framework for understanding, supporting and taking ownership of the Catholic characteristic spirit of your school. This is not an exercise undertaken by outside experts. Rather we invite the school community to articulate its own identity in light of the vision of Catholic schools as expressed by the CSP. The process includes staff, pupils, parents, members of the Board of Management and the broader parish community of which the school is a part. The key focus is on pupils, their welfare and education, and how these might be improved through reflection on the school's characteristic spirit. This process is not intended to be bureaucratic or mechanical; it is a shared reflection on the part of all members of the school community on what really is the characteristic spirit of the school.

It is our hope that when you have completed this initial process you will be better able to articulate your identity. This will be very helpful when speaking about your school both internally and externally. It will also enable you to undertake a process of further development. The website of the CSP will provide pointers in this regard by highlighting good practices and offering ideas for future developments based on

insights drawn from this process. This will facilitate schools who wish to participate in an on-going process concerning the development of their Catholic identity in the medium to longer term.

Engaging with the process

This process is intended to be life-giving and supportive so you should not find it in any way threatening. It will be led and guided by your school community and it will be characterised by honesty and open dialogue. You can consult and seek assistance from the CSP appointed regional co-ordinator as required. We invite you to share your findings with the co-ordinator so that s/he can help you in looking to the future.

What the school needs to do

The Board of Management appoints a facilitator to oversee this process. This person will normally be a teacher in the school. This facilitator will devote seven hours to the process (2 hours for a training meeting, 2 hours completing the documentation, 2 hours meeting with parents and 1 hour reviewing the final documentation).

The principal, the chairperson of the Board of Management and a representative of the parents' association devote three hours to the process (2 hours completing the documentation and 1 hour reviewing the final documentation).

Other time given to the process will be at scheduled meetings of the Board of Management and the staff.

The initial phase of this process is detailed in this document. The minimum time required is a period covered by three regular meetings of the Board of Management. The first of these meetings launches the process; the second

reviews the documentation and the third approves the document and brings the initial phase to a close. It is of course possible that these three meetings are not successive. The minimum period for completing the first phase is that covered by three successive meetings of the board of management; the maximum period is a school year.

THE PROCESS

If this process is to achieve its aims then it is very important that your school follow all of these steps.

Step 1

At the request of the patron, the board of management launches the process in the school and appoints a person to oversee it. It is expected that this will be a teacher working in the school. S/he will have an empathy with the ethos and be respected amongst the staff. In this document s/he will be called the facilitator and s/he will be invited to attend an evening seminar (two hours) organised by the CSP appointed regional co-ordinator where the process will be explained. The facilitator will liaise with the regional co-ordinator who will provide support and answer any questions that arise. The facilitator will be provided with some training in evaluation and group dynamics at the evening seminar.

Step 2

The principal, the chairperson of the Board of Management, a representative of the parents' association and the facilitator together complete this document. This should take no more than two hours. Five key characteristics of Catholic schools are detailed in the text with eight indicators under each characteristic. The

group should tick one of the boxes under each of the forty indicators. Remember that this is a first response to these indicators and the judgment might change in light of further reflection and consultations within the school community. The document is completed electronically to make for easy reading after photocopying. The completed document is photocopied and given to all members of staff and to all members of the Board of Management.

Step 3

The contents of the document are discussed as part of the agendas at the next scheduled staff and Board of Management meetings. Suggested changes to the indicators should be noted and communicated to the facilitator. Pupils in senior classes will be engaged in the process through conversations on the story of our school and some of its key characteristics. Pupils could write their own interpretations of the mission statement of the school and these could be displayed in public areas.

Step 4

(Note: this step will vary considerably from one school to another depending on size). The facilitator invites parents to a discussion group. If insufficient numbers (minimum of six) do not volunteer then the facilitator invites parents individually to join the group. Care should be taken that there is a cross section of parents in the group. The group meets for ninety minutes working through some of the key indicators, especially those most pertinent to parents. Suggested changes to the indicators should be noted by the facilitator.

Step 5

After the previous four steps have been completed the principal, the chairperson of the Board of Management, a representative of the

parents' association and the facilitator revise the document in light of the various conversations that have taken place. They identify at least one indicator under each characteristic where the school will seek to improve its performance and practice over the following year.

Step 6

At the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Management this initial process is brought to a close. If the members of the Board approve the document then it is made available to all members of the school community, including the patron/trustees. If the Board does not approve of the document or if the process highlighted serious issues with regard to the Catholic identity of the school then the chairperson liaises with representatives of the patron on the best way forward.

LOOKING FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE

In each succeeding year the chosen indicators in need of further attention are reviewed at scheduled meetings of the Board of Management and the staff. The list of indicators can be used to develop an on-going plan for improvement. In all of these cases the Board of Management, the staff and parents will find suggestions for the development of each indicator on the website of the CSP – www.catholicschools.ie. Thus it is intended that we will have an on-going process for understanding, supporting and taking ownership of the characteristic spirit in a Catholic school but one that is embedded in scheduled meetings of the school. Once a school has completed the initial phase the school community will have a template to continue a process of reflection over years to come. This will be a rolling process and it will not require the repetition of the initial phase.

THE FIVE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL ARE:

- A. We are called to be followers of Christ.**
- B. We have a Catholic understanding of education.**
- C. The school is a Christian community.**
- D. The school is an agent of personal growth and social transformation.**
- E. Religious education is an integral part of the life of the school.**

The CSP has identified these five key characteristics of a Catholic school. These are statements of vision, of what the school would ideally like to achieve. Under each of these five characteristics eight indicators are provided on the following pages. The long list of indicators is very deliberate as this will allow you to profile your school in terms of its Catholic ethos. A school that suggests that virtually all indicators are “very true of our school” has achieved the ideal! This is unlikely in daily school life. Remember that the five characteristics are statements of vision – what we are called to be; what we would be in an ideal situation. The indicators are not vision statements; they are statements of fact and so you can make a judgment upon them. The more honest you are the better. A school which finds under each characteristic that 3-4 indicators are “very true of our school” and 2-3 indicators are “true of our school but we can do better” would be doing very well. It is almost certain that all schools will find that concerning some indicators “we are weak on this issue” and/or they “have never been part of our school”. This honest appraisal will prove useful as the CSP will provide pointers and support for the further development of these characteristics.

Key characteristics of our school as a Catholic school

A. WE ARE CALLED TO BE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

The vision that underpins all aspects of school life is that the human person is made in the image of God and is called to share in God's own life forever. All who are part of the school are invited to constantly rediscover what it is to be a follower of Christ and to give witness to the centrality of the Gospel. The school continues the mission of Christ entrusted to the Church to go and teach.

Indicators – Please ✓	This is very true of our school	This is true of our school but we can do better	We are weak on this issue	This has never been part of our school
1. The school has a mission statement clearly rooted in the mission of Christ.				
2. All members of the school community are cherished and valued as Christ would welcome them.				
3. At regular school assemblies there is ongoing reflection on the Christian way of life.				
4. Members of staff are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of Jesus Christ.				
5. Children are introduced to and experience a variety of ways of praying including guided reflections, periods of silence and participation in liturgy.				
6. The seasons of the Christian Year are highlighted by appropriate and relevant spiritual celebrations to which all in the school community are invited.				
7. There are Christian symbols (such as the crucifix, art works) in each classroom and place of gathering in the school.				
8. Copies of the Bible are available for use in senior classes and the Bible is always treated with respect in the school community.				

Our school will give further attention to Indicator number _____ in the coming year.

B. WE HAVE A CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION

The school values a broad curriculum and co-curricular activities in order to foster a deeper sense of the whole person. Staff and pupils seek excellence, including academic achievement, in the context of a broad Christian philosophy of education. The school seeks to nourish the mind, body and soul through a varied academic curriculum, involvement in the arts, physical education and sporting activity, and a commitment to moral development and personal responsibility. In a more multicultural society Catholic schools welcome all that is positive in this new diversity and instil an attitude of respect for the good of the other.

Indicators – Please ✓	This is very true of our school	This is true of our school but we can do better	We are weak on this issue	This has never been part of our school
1. Education is written and spoken about by the principal and the teachers as something broad and holistic; as embracing the academic, physical, social and spiritual development of the child from a Christian perspective.				
2. School policies seek high standards in all areas of school life. Excellence is an ideal to which we aspire while acknowledging that it must be understood, written and spoken about not as an absolute measure but as the best that each individual child is capable of attaining.				
3. The school makes explicit mention – in its literature, statements and oral communications at key events – that the spiritual development of pupils is a central educational aim.				
4. The school consciously attends to the moral development of the pupils in its policies and planning.				
5. Pupils of other faiths and those of more humanist and secularist beliefs who are members of the school community are welcomed into the life of the school.				
6. The Board of Management, principal and staff are aware of the importance of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue in Catholic education and attempt to give expression to these in the life of the school.				
7. Values inspired by the Gospel are integral to decision making within and on behalf of the school.				
8. The school offers opportunities for pupils, during and after regular school time, to engage in a broad and diverse range of activities, consistent with the mission statement of the school.				

Our school will give further attention to Indicator number _____ in the coming year.

C. THE SCHOOL IS A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Schools are communities made up of pupils, parents, staff, board members, patrons / trustees and others associated with the school. Parents are the most important educators of their children. Catholic primary schools are rooted in parish communities where they are an important part of local life and foster a sense of shared responsibility for Catholic education.

Indicators – Please ✓	This is very true of our school	This is true of our school but we can do better	We are weak on this issue	This has never been part of our school
1. Issues relating to the Catholic identity of the school appear frequently on the agenda for Board of Management meetings.				
2. Meetings within the school (Board of Management, Staff, Parents' Association etc.) usually begin and/or end with prayerful reflection.				
3. The contribution of parents to the life of the school is encouraged and welcome.				
4. The school is active and visible in parish and local community events.				
5. Catholic pupils are prepared for the sacraments through a partnership of home, school and parish.				
6. The school is a safe and caring environment for its employees and supports are provided for individual members of staff to foster deeper development.				
7. The members of staff of the school are confident in articulating its Catholic ethos.				
8. There is a real rather than a notional link between the school and the local Catholic parish community, which in turn supports the school.				

Our school will give further attention to Indicator number _____ in the coming year.

D. THE SCHOOL IS AN AGENT OF PERSONAL GROWTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The school community is committed to growth in moral awareness and to the search for justice, integrity and care for the earth. There is emphasis on pastoral care and student support not least for those who are educationally disadvantaged. A dialogue between faith and contemporary culture is fostered in an age-appropriate manner.

Indicators – Please ✓	This is very true of our school	This is true of our school but we can do better	We are weak on this issue	This has never been part of our school
1. Our pupils, in a spirit of mutual respect and trust, can approach staff, share concerns and feel listened to.				
2. All school planning and policy development is clearly linked to and inspired by the school's mission statement.				
3. Visitors to our school experience an atmosphere that reflects the values of justice, forgiveness, integrity and respect for the needs and rights of pupils, parents and members of staff.				
4. The school has a living link with a school in a developing country.				
5. The school participates in and supports justice and peace initiatives such as Trócaire's Lenten campaign.				
6. Our school is involved in programmes such as the 'Green Flag' programme, promoting an appreciation of and respect for the environment.				
7. Pupils receive an age appropriate introduction to media studies as they learn to critique what they see on their TV and computer screens (e.g. how cartoons and advertisements work; the models of 'success' and 'happiness' being promoted).				
8. Given that pupils inhabit a world of information technology members of the school community are invited to reflect on the uses, influences and dangers of modern means of communication: Internet, Facebook, Twitter, mobile phones.				

Our school will give further attention to Indicator number _____ in the coming year.

E. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The Religious Education programme includes faith formation, prayer and sacramental experiences and a growing awareness of being stewards of God's creation. There is support for staff, the principal, pupils, parents and members of boards in opening their hearts and minds to the presence of God, as religious education is not just a school subject but embraces the whole journey of life.

Indicators – Please ✓	This is very true of our school	This is true of our school but we can do better	We are weak on this issue	This has never been part of our school
1. There is a policy statement in the school on religious education which includes faith formation, prayer, sacramental experiences and awareness of the stewardship of God's creation. This is stated as a developmental, year by year policy and integrated with relevant policy documents across other aspects of school life.				
2. The religious education programme receives its allotted time for each year and the school follows the curriculum and textbooks approved by the Irish Episcopal Conference.				
3. The principal or the RE special duties teacher work with class groupings in planning the work for the year and this is clearly stated and communicated to parents, staff and the local parish as a basis for mutual understanding and a partnership approach.				
4. There is a place of prayer/ sacred space suitably situated and maintained within the school, which is open to all in the school community.				
5. At the beginning and end of each school day and at other specified times during the day, there is time devoted to prayer.				
6. There is a developmental and inter-disciplinary programme in the school on environmental and ecological education, which is inclusive of religious education.				
7. In partnership with the parish and other bodies, opportunities are provided to staff and board members for adult spiritual support and growth.				
8. The religious education and faith formation programmes of the school are being reviewed and renewed in light of the guidelines and vision of the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland – Share the Good News.				

Our school will give further attention to Indicator number _____ in the coming year.

CSP SCHOOLS PAMPHLET

10 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

7 *Are there Catholic schools in other countries apart from Ireland?*

Yes, there are Catholic schools in almost every country in the world. In many nations as in our own, they form a central part of the education system, while in almost all democratic societies they are funded by the State.

8 *Will there be Catholic schools in Ireland in the future?*

Yes there will. It is part of the role of the Church to teach, and as long as there are parents who want such schools, they will be provided. Given the popularity of such schools throughout the world, there is every reason to believe that Irish parents will continue to value and demand this type of schooling for their children.

9 *How will Catholic schools develop in the future?*

Catholic schools will continue to provide a quality education through a deepening partnership of home, school and parish. The vision underpinning this partnership can be found in the new National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland – Share the Good News.

10 *How do I find out more about Catholic schools?*

Go to www.catholiccschools.ie.

SOME NUMBERS

0 The amount of Euro spent on pay, travel and subsistence for the volunteers serving on Boards of Management in Catholic primary schools in the Republic of Ireland.

46 The number of times Jesus is called teacher in the Gospels. It is the title most commonly associated with him by his followers.

50 The number of years since the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Concerning Catholic schools the Council said: "parents must be recognised as the primary and principal educators" and teachers must have "special qualities of mind and heart, very careful preparation, and continuing readiness to renew and accept".

52 The greatest number of nationalities that we have found in a Catholic primary school.

2,841 The number of Catholic primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. These schools are at the heart of our local communities.

17,046 The number of volunteers serving on Boards of Management in Catholic primary schools in the Republic of Ireland.

Catholic Schools Partnership

10

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About Catholic Primary Schools





Catholic Schools Partnership is an umbrella body providing support for all the partners in Catholic schools. Here we answer some frequently asked questions about Catholic primary schools.

1

Aren't all schools the same?

While all schools share a lot in common, they are not all the same. Every school has a certain ethos or characteristic spirit that inspires all aspects of the life of the school.

2

What is different about a Catholic school?

Our religious faith is central to our lives and influences the way that we see things. We believe that the life of Christ is really important, that each person is made in the image of God and that we form part of a parish community called the Church. We pray every day. We learn about the Bible, the Church, Mass and the Sacraments, and the teachings of the Church. We introduce pupils to the Christian values that we hope will inform the way they will live as children, adolescents and mature adults.

3

What do pupils learn?

From the outset the experience of the pupil in a Catholic school is characterised by respect for both faith and reason. So we teach children all aspects of the curriculum – languages, maths, music, science, art, sport. This is all part of what we do at school. In all of this we want to cherish each person as Christ would do, and we seek to support parents in their task of nurturing their children toward fulfilment in life and of preparing them to take their place in the world according to the gifts that they have been given.



4

Who attends Catholic schools?

Obviously the vast majority of pupils are Catholic, as many Catholic parents want their children to have a faith-based education. Catholic schools are inclusive and have been leaders in integrating migrants into local communities. Our schools have also led the way in areas such as special needs and traveller education.



5

What about children from other religious backgrounds?

Children from various backgrounds are welcomed into Catholic schools. The number varies from one place to another but respect for all religions and for people of no faith is an important part of the life of the school.

6

Are Catholic schools as good as other schools?

Yes, they are. By all measures, both in Ireland and other countries, Catholic schools are amongst the best schools. There are many international surveys that suggest Catholic schools achieve the highest academic quality.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

“In a climate of growing secularism, Catholic schools are distinguished by faith in the transcendent mystery of God as the source of all that exists and as the meaning of human existence. This faith is not simply the subject-matter of particular lessons but forms the foundation of all that we do and the horizon of all that takes place in the school.”¹⁰

Nurturing the growth of faith in the child is primarily the right and responsibility of the parents: ‘Before all others, parents are bound to form their children, by word and example, in faith and Christian living.’¹¹ The Catholic school and the wider parish community will support parents in fulfilling their obligation in this regard.

One of the most important responsibilities of the Board of Management is to ensure that the school continues to provide religious education for the Catholic children attending the school.

“Specifically religious education, designed to confirm and deepen an understanding of the faith, forms an essential part of the curriculum in Catholic schools and functions at its core. This means, for example, that Catholic schools commit resources and time to religious education as a matter of priority.”¹²

Religious education will include instruction in the teaching of the Catholic Church, but is wider than mere knowledge, including as it does religious formation as well as information.

Following baptism, the child is gradually assimilated into the Church through sharing in

the faith-life of the community and through progressive instruction in the doctrine, spirituality, liturgy, culture and tradition of the Church.

It is appropriate that this instruction should be included as part of the total learning process experienced by the child during the period of formal schooling. It is equally important that the child should experience a way of life that is inspired by that instruction and that leads the child to know and love God.

By virtue of his office, the parish priest is to ensure that children are properly prepared for the Sacrament of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation by means of religious instruction and formation over an appropriate period of time.¹³ This preparation takes place through the collaboration of home, school and parish.

In each diocese, the Bishop appoints an individual or group of people to act as diocesan advisers for religious education. The Board of Management should know the names of the diocesan advisers and should arrange to meet them annually, if possible.

The diocesan advisers provide support for teachers in the area of religious education. The diocesan advisers will visit the classes in the primary schools in the diocese and offer advice to teachers.

The diocesan advisers are in a position to report to the Bishop, the parish priest and to the Board of Management about their visit to the school.

¹⁰ Irish Bishops' Conference, *Vision 08 A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland*, p3

¹¹ Code of Canon Law 774#2

¹² Irish Bishops' Conference, *Vision 08 A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland*, p4

¹³ Code of Canon Law 777#2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE RULES FOR NATIONAL SCHOOLS

Rule 68 for national schools recognises that religious instruction is the most important part of the school's curriculum and a fundamental part of the school course:

Rule 68 [Under review]

Of all parts of a school curriculum Religious Instruction is by far the most important, as its subject matter, God's honour and service, includes the proper use of all man's faculties, and affords the most powerful inducements to their proper use. Religious Instruction is, therefore, a fundamental part of the school course, and a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school.

The teacher should constantly inculcate the practice of charity, justice, truth, purity, patience, temperance, obedience to lawful authority, and all the other moral virtues. In this way he will fulfil the primary duty of an educator, the moulding to perfect form of his pupils' character, habituating them to observe, in their relations with God and with their neighbours, the laws which God, both directly through the dictates of natural reason and through Revelation and indirectly through the ordinance of lawful authority, imposes on mankind.¹⁴

In addition to Rule 68, the following Rules for National Schools also apply to religious education:

Rule 69

- 1. The religious denomination of each pupil must be entered in the school register and roll book. This information should be ascertained from the parent (the father, if possible) or the guardian of the pupil, where necessary.*
- 2. (a) No pupil shall receive, or be present at, any Religious Instruction of which his parents or guardians disapprove.*
(b) The periods for formal Religious Instruction shall be fixed so as to facilitate the withdrawal of pupils to whom paragraph (a) of this section applies.
- 3. Where such Religious Instruction as their parents or guardians approve is not provided in the school for any section of the pupils, such pupils must, should their parents or guardians so desire, be allowed to absent themselves from school, at reasonable times, for the purpose of receiving that instruction elsewhere.*
- 4. Visitors may not be present during formal Religious Instruction unless with the express approval of the manager.*

The timetabling of secular and religious instruction is set out in Rule 54 and at page 70 of the Introduction book to the Primary School Curriculum 1999.

¹⁴ Rules for National Schools under the Department of Education 1965 ¹³ Code of Canon Law 777#2

PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM 1999

The curriculum for primary schools acknowledges the importance of the spiritual dimension of the person and the role of religious education, which 'enables the child to develop spiritual and moral values and to come to a knowledge of God'. The following is an extract from the Introduction to the Primary Curriculum:

In seeking to develop the full potential of the individual, the curriculum takes into account the child's affective, aesthetic, spiritual, moral and religious needs. The spiritual dimension is a fundamental aspect of individual experience and its religious and cultural expression is an inextricable part of Irish culture and history. Religious education specifically enables the child to develop spiritual and moral values and to come to a knowledge of God.

Irish society recognises the right of the individual to choose the particular form of religious expression that reflects the spiritual aspirations and experience he or she seeks. It acknowledges, too, the importance of tolerance towards the practice, culture and life-style of a range of religious convictions and expressions, and aspires to develop in children a tolerance and understanding towards the beliefs of others.

Education, generally, seeks to reflect and cater for a variety of religious conviction and acknowledges the right of parents to arrange for their children's education in a school whose religious ethos coincides with their own religious belief. It is the responsibility of the school to provide a religious education that is consonant with its ethos and at the same time

to be flexible in making alternative organisational arrangements for those who do not wish to avail of the particular religious education it offers. It is equally important that the beliefs and sensibilities of every child are respected.

Since the Department of Education and Science, in the context of the Education Act (1998), recognises the rights of the different church authorities to design curricula in religious education at primary level and to supervise their teaching and implementation, a religious education curriculum is not included in the curriculum documents prepared by the NCCA.¹⁵

¹⁵ Primary School Curriculum. Introduction Government Publications 1999 p.58

ETHOS ('CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT') OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Introduction – Irish Bishop's Conference

The patron and trustees have responsibility for determining the ethos of the school and the Board of Management is responsible to the patron for upholding it (Education Act 1998 Section 15). Religious congregations and orders identify the specific charism of their founder. The ethos of the school will best find expression in the day to day life of the school through the interaction and cooperation of the patron, trustees, Board of Management Principal teacher, staff, parents and pupils.

In a pastoral letter in 2008,¹⁶ the Bishops of Ireland outlined a vision for Catholic education in which they stated: "While they share many characteristics with other schools in offering a public service, Catholic schools seek to reflect a distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education. This is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel sees the world in which we live as God's creation. As human persons, we are made in God's image and destined for everlasting life with God. Life is a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Jesus, who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14, 6). He came among us so that, in his own words, we might 'have life and have it in all its fullness'" (John 10, 10).

Based on this vision, the following characteristics would be sought within the general ethos experienced and promoted by the school community:

- As a formal agent of education within the Catholic community, the school models and transmits a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are inspired by Gospel values;
- Christ, as the source of those values, is a familiar and attractive reality for the teachers and pupils;
- Mary, the strong woman of the Gospels, is admired as the exemplar of the values;
- The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment;
- Religious education is provided for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church;
- Prayer is a feature of the school day;
- The pupils are prepared for the reception of the Sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation in accordance with arrangements in the diocese;
- The liturgical seasons are part of the rhythm of the school year;
- The children are given opportunities to participate in liturgical celebrations arranged by the school;
- The school identifies itself with its parish, working closely with the local priest (or a priest) who visits the school frequently;
- The pupils are encouraged to participate in parish activities appropriate to their age;

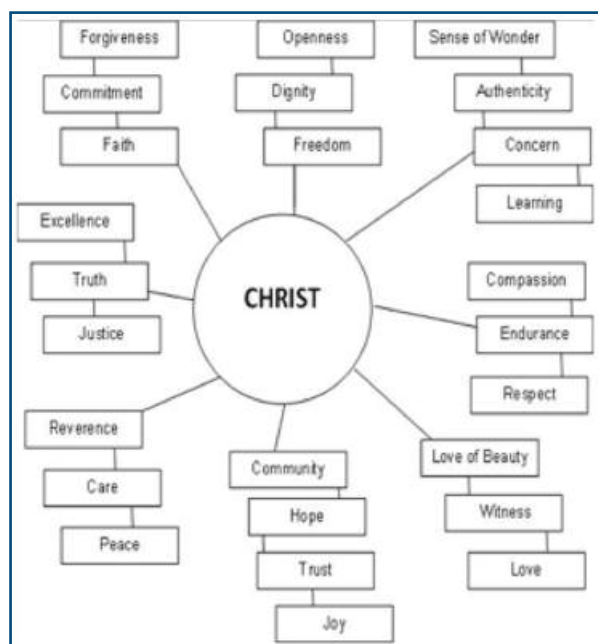
¹⁶ Irish Bishops' Conference, *Vision 08*, p2

- The school aims at fostering a sense of community between management, teachers, parents and pupils, and a sense of insertion into the wider community of the parish. Gradually, pupils acquire a sense of the Universal Church whose concern extends to all peoples;
- The Catholic school '...is open to generous dialogue with Christians of other traditions and those of other faiths and none, while remaining true to its own distinctive ethos';¹⁷
- The principal and teachers aim at making the school a centre of excellence in which high professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe and happy environment;
- A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities;
- The school's code of discipline reflects the Christian values promoted within the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils;
- The school recognises the dignity and value of each person made in the image and likeness of God. This is reflected in the organisation of the school (including admission policies);
- Close contact is maintained between the school and the home. Parents and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another as partners in leading the young pupils to the fullness of their potential at the different stages;
- Teachers are encouraged to develop their personal and professional talents through which they glorify God and serve those young people in whose education they play such a significant role;
- Ancillary staff members are highly esteemed and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education;
- A positive ethos, while intangible, is nonetheless recognised and appreciated as supportive and enlivening to those who learn and those who work in the school.

¹⁷ Irish Bishops' Conference, *Vision 08*, p8

THE ETHOS OF THE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

(a paper presented to Primary School Principals by Sr Eileen Randles, IBVM, out-going General Secretary, CPSMA. Spring 2002)



The mission of our Church derives from the compelling mandate of Christ to bring the message of salvation to all - to announce the Good News of salvation - to liberate and build up people realising, in the words of Irenaeus, that the glory of God is man and woman fully human, fully alive. The message has to be constantly represented, retold, in contemporary terms.

One of the principal means of achieving this objective is through the enterprise which we call 'education'. It is insofar as schools in our times have become major formal agencies in this enterprise that the Church seeks involvement in the school system, here as in other countries. Our faith is grounded in the belief that we are made in the image of God, redeemed by Christ and destined to be with God in eternity. We find our true identity in

relationships with other persons, giving expression to our love and service of God by our love and service of our fellow human beings, without distinction. We have the 1st and greatest commandment to love God - and the 2nd is like this - to love our neighbour.

Our Church runs schools because of a wish to enshrine and promote within the educational process a particular understanding and perception of the person which extends beyond the secular to include the spiritual. To seek to exclude the religious formation of the pupil from education would be to truncate what the Church understands to be a true and full education. We need to constantly recall that the goal of true education is the development of the whole person, including, the spiritual and religious dimension.

We can lose sight of the goal - we can forget the ideal in the day-to-day activities and struggles of our life and work. The vision has to be continuously recalled, and renewed.

So, a session like this evening's can be helpful, even if it merely raises questions in our minds. The concept of a Catholic school is not some airy-fairy philosophical ideal floating free of reality. Those who are responsible for Church-linked schools assume a serious duty to ensure that the school will strive to be a centre of excellence in every sphere. If a Catholic school is not really a good school and accepted as such, it would not be deemed to give that service to society and to the Church which it is expected to give. In this sense, the Catholic school is called on to be outstanding with regard to the solid human, moral, scholastic and cultural formation of its pupils and with regard to an up to date preparation of young people for active and responsible participation in every area of social, economic, professional, and civic life. The Church's view of education

is in no way opposed to that of the State, which also has a legitimate interest in education. The Catholic Church holds a philosophy of education which enhances the virtues of citizenship sought by the State. Both Church & State are concerned about the development of the individual as a member of his/her community.

The Church will seek to expand the horizons of the individual beyond the secular and material. In the words of Bishop Dónal Murray of Limerick:

'The Catholic tradition of education involves no diminution or distortion of the aims of education. Instead it gives to the Wholeness, Truth, Respect, Justice and Freedom pursued in education a new depth, a richer possibility, a fuller understanding. These elements would find an echo in the hearts of many parents, teachers, members of our community and in schools of many different structures and religious affiliations'.

We want now to consider the implications of running Catholic schools – a topic which may have been left slightly peripheral as we struggled to become informed on all manner of pedagogical and management issues. And yet, the fact that we are responsible for specifically Catholic schools is really the heart of the matter.

I would want to immediately recognise and acknowledge that tremendous work in this area is already in place in our Primary schools. I would ask you to accept what I may say this evening as a basis for reflection and indeed reassurance rather than in any way a comment on what you are already about.

So, let me dwell for a minute on some externals.

As I approach your school as a visitor, I want to address first the question of identity.

How will I know as I drive in that I am about to enter a Catholic school? What is the name of the school - the 'Inscription', as the Rules for National Schools describe it? Does the inscription indicate that this is a Catholic school? Of course the name of the school may indicate the Patronage of Our Lord, of Our Lady or of one of the Saints.

But if I am not very familiar with such titles, do I get the message? Schools of other Churches may also use such titles. What about your notepaper, your enrolment policy or other school documents? How far must I search to establish that this school is a Catholic school? Is there any problem with inserting the word 'Catholic' in your title? Are you uneasy about this? If so, why? I invite you to confront your reservations or unease and tease them out.

As I move into your school building, I may well see what are usually called 'Religious objects' statues, pictures etc. Those who belittle Catholic schools seek to imply that we hang up a few 'holy pictures' and think that's enough to create - a Catholic school. We are not so naive. However, in a school context we know that children learn through all sorts of stimuli. We use visual aids in all learning situations. Why would we not use visual aids as background for the education in religion which forms part of the school programme? Symbols speak powerfully to the imagination and can make an impression which lasts long beyond the memory of facts.

We have of course, to be conscious of the fact that children are very literal in their interpretation of words and pictures, particularly in their earlier years. We cannot soften the reality of Calvary. However, we may have to reconsider the appropriateness of

pictures of saints with swords through their hearts etc. The symbolic import of darts and anchors and lilies may well be lost on 6/7 year olds. They are more likely to be upset by certain images or else to dismiss them with whatever is the current phrase for 'yuck'! It can be important to have age-appropriate and suitable religious art in our schools.

Identity, of course, is not the same as identification. You could indeed have the word 'Catholic' hanging out of everything about the school but not identify with the Church. Obviously, this moves us to another plane. Here again there is a checklist of things to do which can be ticked, and most schools will score highly on the action section. For example, at a minimal level, the prescribed catechetical programme is followed, children are prepared and presented for the Sacraments, there is probably some recognition of the major feasts of the year. Is that enough? Does this activity reflect, describe or determine the ethos of the school? I'd say hardly.

A Catholic school is not simply a school that has a R.E. programme. Simply adding R.E. to the Curriculum is not the essence of the Catholic School. Of course, the R.E. programme is a central part of the education provided in a Catholic school, dealing as it does explicitly and formally with the religious dimension of human experience. The Primary R.E. programme introduces the pupils gradually and incrementally to the Church's message which answers the deepest questions of the human heart - questions about living and dying, about the meaning and value of human existence, about human identity and social responsibilities about prayer, Sacraments and liturgy. But the R.E. programme cannot stand alone and be expected to support the full edifice of a Catholic School.

If an R.E. programme does not ensure an appropriate Catholic ethos, what does?

Perhaps we need to unpack this word 'Ethos' to establish what we are actually talking about. So - what is 'ethos' - or at least what understanding of ethos can I put before you?

'Ethos' needs to be given life by persons. A place, per se, does not have an ethos. But as soon as people occupy a place, an ethos begins to be created. It is not instantaneous. Instead, it emerges gradually from the repeated forms of interaction and relationships between people until it becomes the norm for behaviour, reactions, decisions and approaches to people and events.

Ethos will form the framework within which people operate and at the same time the ethos is continually being re-established and sustained by the actions and attitudes and values of those people and the practices which embody those values, the beliefs and attitudes promoted by the school and the goals aspired to, valued and celebrated by the school community. Ethos is dynamic, a way of being and of acting which becomes embedded while at the same time remaining delicate and sensitive to change. It is not fixed - it evolves and develops and it can change, sometimes dramatically and painfully. Every new group of people has a new dynamic. Even a minor change of personnel within a group can influence the ethos of that group.

So can we move on now to look at what the ethos within a Catholic Primary school might ideally be?

I'll proceed on the understanding that we are all weak - we set the ideal to aim at - we don't reach the ideal all the time but - in the words of a Dublin City Centre school's motto - 'Aim for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars'.

There are many worthy books and articles written about the essence of the Catholic school. Some can be quite obscure, particularly those we read in translation. However, the fundamental message in all the literature is the same. This evening I will try to convey the message in familiar language some of you may feel I'm being bland and over simple. But as I see it, our task this evening is to apply the good theory to the actual practice within our schools.

Let me remind you of a description of what a Catholic School aims to do and to be.

A Roman Catholic School (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides Religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

I suggest that the most important words for us to-night are 'models and promotes'. The school is expected not only to promote and teach a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in Jesus Christ but also to model such a way of living and being. This is where the challenge lies for all involved in the school of which the Principal is the acknowledged leader. Possibly the most searching question is 'how do people experience my school? - What do people experience in my school?

We suggest that the policies, practices and attitudes of the school should be inspired by Gospel values. Is this some 'church' language

which is difficult to translate into the lived reality? Perhaps we should consider what we mean by 'gospel values' so as to establish how they can be lived out within the school context.

We can start at any point since Christ is the foundation for all the values listed.

'All human values find their fulfilment as a consequence of their unity in Christ' - Letter from Cong. For Catholic Education. Dec '97.

Excellence: I have already pointed out that a Catholic school worthy of its name should be a centre of excellence as a school, a centre of learning in the broadest sense. This requires high professional standards from all the teachers, with work prepared, delivered, assessed. Teachers would be expected to be fully trained, up-to-date, interested in the progress of their pupils and in developing their God-given talents to their utmost potential, calling their pupils to excellence in every sphere, while recognising that the level of excellence appropriate to each child may well vary, depending on the child's abilities and gifts. The focus would be on the child rather than on a rigid demanding standard perceived as excellent by the teachers or principal. Pupils would be constantly encouraged and affirmed, promoting a wholesome self-esteem and confidence consistent with their dignity and uniqueness as persons. Slipshod indifferent work should have no place in a school, above all in a school proclaiming itself a Catholic school within the Church's ministry to the person. The pursuit of excellence would also prompt teachers to continue their own professional development, supported by the Board of Management.

Truth - an attribute of Christ Himself- should be the goal of all activity. Obviously, the pursuit of Truth as an ideal extends beyond merely avoiding untruths. It refers to the profound

truth of who we are and what gives meaning to our lives. It surely calls for integrity, uprightness, honesty in the fullest sense. It reminds me of the Irish description of DUINE MACÁNTA, an almost untranslatable term, but one which all of you will fully understand. Can we say that all who work in our schools are DAOINE MACÁNTA - true people - people of Truth, of Gospel values? Is truth among pupils honoured, respected, rewarded? Do pupils know that they can expect to be treated in a positive manner if they speak the truth in all circumstances? Do we 'model and promote' the fullness of Truth?

Justice - embraces full delivery of what is due and covers regular and punctual attendance, and delivery of full programmes as well as probity in all financial affairs. It also embraces a sense of fairness and fair play between Principal - Teachers - Pupils - Parents. The Biblical meaning of Justice is right relationship with God and as a consequence - right relationships with other persons. How often do we hear it said that so and so was strict but fair. Think back to your own school days. What memories come to mind? You may recall the positive experience of the fair and just teacher - or, on the contrary, still nurse resentment of the teacher who was unfair, or unfair in one respect. Remember, we are creating the memories of to-day's pupils. What will they recall in years to come?

We look for commitment from the Principal and teachers - shown in the generosity which is essential in an effective teacher - dedicated unrelenting service to pupils, energetic efforts to help children to the next stage of their development, enthusiastic espousing of the importance of the central role of the teacher in the life of each child. The authentic sincere person is a joy to work with and learn from,

living out as he/she does the values of truth, and uprightness and justice.

We are called to show endurance - both in terms of sticking with the role and in being prepared to accept that others are weak also.

We may have to be patient and what used to be called 'long-suffering', remembering that we are the adults who are expected to be mature, allowing for the fact that our pupils are still learning, still growing towards, probably indeed groping towards a level of self-control and appropriate behaviour. There are times when wise teachers and principals hear no evil, see no evil - We make allowances in a spirit of generosity and of caring rather than taking offence too easily in an ego-centric fashion.

Concern for others and compassion are qualities sought in every good teacher. These qualities are called on increasingly as pupils come from backgrounds where pain and deprivation of one kind or another can be so prevalent. These are akin to the value of deep respect for the person, irrespective of background, giftedness or attitude. Difference of national or ethnic backgrounds would be respected and celebrated with the pupils. Do we extend our intrinsic respect beyond the pupils to parents -including those who may be less than co-operative - and to others who may be causing us difficulties? How do we communicate with officials of the Department of Education & Science? Can they presume they will be treated with respect by the Catholic school community?

We are a broken people. What message does our code of behaviour/Discipline convey to the pupils? Is our school harsh, cold, unforgiving, punitive? Do teachers take black and white positions - either that pupil goes or I do - What level of forgiveness exists between staff and principal, between staff members? Do we model forgiveness and new beginnings to our pupils - or do they say the teachers don't speak to each other. We show forgiveness without being mushy or soft since children also have to learn right from wrong - but a Catholic school should be a place where grudges are not held, where children should be helped to learn from mistakes and misdemeanours and move on, secure in their full acceptance within the school community.

When we consider witness as a gospel value, we think back to authenticity, to commitment, to justice. We realise, don't we, that Religious instruction can become empty words falling on deaf ears, if the authentic Christian witness that reinforces it is absent from the school climate. Perhaps, as President McAleese suggests, some of us grew up deeply confused by stories of a patient, gentle, loving God, transmitted by teachers capable of unprovoked spontaneous combustion and terrifying displays of anger. What messages are we conveying to the pupils - what memories are we creating for them? Pope Paul VI summed it up well 'People, 'he says' listen to witnesses more readily than to teachers; and if they listen to teachers, it is because they are also good witnesses'. We can write all we like in mission statements and school brochures - and no doubt sincere words - but unless there is a convergence between the stated ethos and actual experience of pupils, teachers, parents, it becomes like a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Is what we model a reflection of what we promote?

Speaking of Faith in a Catholic School, God cannot be the great absent one or the unwelcome intruder.

What is the place of prayer in the staff room - in the class room? Is God a central figure in our thinking - the most important reference point in all events and decisions?

Does faith in God inform our days and inspire our thinking and speaking? Are the liturgical seasons of the year reflected in the life of the school? Is the importance of Ritual recognised and honoured in our school? Do you see your school as an integral part of the parish and of the church's mission? Is belief in God a given to be treasured and nurtured by and within the school community? Donal Neary, in a recent publication, describes faith as 'a gift wrapped in the faith of others'.

It has been well said that in a Catholic school, personal faith should be like background music to all the life and activities of the school.

In addition to knowledge of the faith and church attendance, do we have and promote a feeling of belonging within the Catholic church community, a joy in our faith -- is there among us a readiness to participate in the life of the Church, to show concrete commitment. Is being a member of the Catholic Church part of my personal identity? It is to enable teachers to feel at home and at ease within the Catholic school, to experience a sense of belonging and to contribute to the promotion of the desired ethos of the school that we look for teachers trained in Catholic Colleges and holding a Diploma in Religious Education. Are our teachers aware of working in a Catholic School? Is this adverted to as a reason why a particular ethos should prevail? Is it referred to at staff meetings? Does it influence decisions? When do pupils become aware of being in a Catholic School?

To suggest that the dignity of all persons is a gospel value needs little elaboration but can become forgotten and excluded when tensions arise in the work or classroom environment. Yet, the centrality of the person, the value and importance of the person, the inherent dignity of the person should influence how we speak to, react to, write to, act towards all others with whom we come into contact including members of ethnic minorities and people of various nationalities. This attitude and approach should be apparent in our Admissions policies and practices and in our Code of behaviour. And it must be lived and experienced by everyone.

The reverence we are called to goes back to our understanding of the person as a reflection of God, made by God and destined to be with God for eternity. This realisation must surely inspire the utmost reverence in our speech and behaviour and in the approach we encourage pupils to have to each other and to their teachers.

This reverence and respect should exclude any hint of bullying or harassment - and of course makes any level of abuse totally unacceptable. Reverence for the person is expressed also in our care for that person, our concern for the well-being and physical safety of the person. Peace is that calm sense of well-being which allows for and flows from positive staff relations. Everyone shares the vision and is focussed on the work in hand; there is an absence of strife, bitterness, competition, petty jealousies and grudges. Teachers and pupils will look forward to going in each day to a school where there is personal peace of mind; a calm atmosphere and an understanding that each one is doing his/her level best in all areas.

Moving on. The Catholic school is expected to promote a most positive sense of freedom - of intellectual independence, of the importance of

an informed mind and conscience, of a healthy self-confidence which can resist peer pressure, media pressure. The aim is to lead young people progressively from what is described as a 'must' conscience, which has controlling forces imposed from without, to a 'should' conscience which derives from internalised convictions, freely espoused.

Catholic schools promoting freedom are called on to help young people to free themselves from the constrictions of merely surviving in to-day's society.

Openness - in the Spirit promoted by Vat. 11 - to the world, to other races and faiths, to other schools, openness to learn, to link with parents, and with others, openness to admit mistakes, to put the past behind and move on, promoting and sharing a sense of wonder at God's greatness, the joys of discovery, the beauties of creation, the joy of music and literature and indeed of technology 'My God, how great Thou art' as we experience our personal pieces of revelation.

An aim of education is sometimes presented as love of the true, the good and the beautiful. Love of beauty is noted here as a gospel value. God is the source of all beauty. We thank God for beauty - we should remind ourselves and our staff that the school, and classroom and school grounds may be the only places of beauty in the experience of a particular child.

The teacher's appreciation of pupils' art work and its display in the classroom and school - with regular changes, of course, gently leads the child to see the beauty of colour and shapes. We aim to have well maintained decorated classrooms and school environment. The minor capital works grant is of great benefit in this regard. Love of the environment and respect for nature also come into this category

and is a reason, along with respect and honesty, why vandalism is so frowned on by the school community.

Allied to love of beauty is the sense of wonder or delight of newness. The child's wonder is a constant source of personal renewal for the teacher. It would be a travesty if any person within a school could be accused of ignoring, eliminating, discouraging a child's sense of wonder and awe. To see in the eyes of children a sense of hope, trust and curiosity is one of the greatest gifts afforded to those who teach - particularly, we could say, those who teach at Primary level. Recent research on choice of career shows a significant number indicating preference for Primary teaching because of the joy of working with young children.

Speaking of Joy - this quality derives from so much else I've mentioned - from a sense of personal well-being, from an atmosphere of peace where everyone is respected, from a secure sense of faith in God and hope in His presence with us at all times, from a sense of supportive community where everyone is wished well - the gift of joy deep seated joy which survives surface problems is indeed something to aim for and to treasure. It's interesting that the White paper leading to the Education Act '98 proposed that we should provide an educational experience for pupils which would be 'joyful and safe' - it is quite unusual, indeed unique internationally to have an official document referring to 'joy' within the education system. Can we deliver on it?

What are we modelling? What are we promoting?

All the literature about Catholic schools refers to the importance and value of the supportive sharing community. In studies in the U.S. on the effectiveness of schools, it emerges that an identifiable 'plus' in the case of Catholic

schools which perform above the average is the faith community which share the values and educational philosophy of the school. This aspect is frequently presented as the added value, which the Catholic school has.

As the faith community around your school disintegrates somewhat, the role of the school in the personal and religious formation of the pupil becomes more important but also more difficult. In this connection, the very numerical strength of the Catholic Primary school system could be a weakness. Disaffected, indifferent or even hostile parents frequently have no choice of school. They may be reluctant to have their child in a Catholic school and resentful of what they see as the monopoly of the Catholic Church. This can produce difficulties and pain for all concerned. Situations can arise which call for all your patience, understanding, respect, forgiveness, in a word, witness to all that is most open and loving in a committed member of the Catholic Church. You may have the opportunity of surprising such parents by your gentleness and friendship. You could be the catalyst that would open them to healing and to finding their way back to God. You all know the importance of close collaboration by all members of the school community, with parents as the most important, and essential partners with the school.

Does your school facilitate and encourage parent involvement?

Every teacher will be called on to live in hope and trust that every child will grow in wisdom and grace as they increase in age. Trust in others - trust that they are being truthful and upright - trust that they mean well and that all will be well, is a very liberating attitude for the individual. Of course, the teacher must lead the pupils to appreciate the positive virtue of being trustworthy - not always an easy task.

Similarly, and equally important, the child places a trust in the teacher which is a most precious and fragile gift. How a teacher honours the child's trust can mark that child's relationships with others for life. To deprive a child of being able to have that trust is to diminish the child's life, and growth, and to threaten his/her faith in other people and ultimately in God. We carry a most privileged responsibility in this regard - 'To be entrusted with the development and well-being of our children is to be entrusted with the future itself'.

The cover of your Board Members' Handbook reminds you that 'The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping'. (Church in Modern World). Are you, as the leader of a Catholic school, strong enough to do this?

I have left love to the end . . . If I have all the information about rules and regulations - if I have all the most wonderful policies, the most up to date Technology and facilities, but have no love - I am inadequate as the Principal of a Catholic School. We're all familiar with the piece in 1 Corinthians which says . . . Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited, it is never rude or selfish, it does not take offence and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other peoples' sins or failings but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.

This extract, as you see, sums up the Gospel values we have mentioned this evening.

Couldn't this be basis for the mission statement for the Principal of the Catholic School? But to make it really come home, I invite you to substitute your own name for 'love' in the extract. Can I say with sincerity that Eileen is...

We aim at the ideal - We don't always reach it, but we keep trying.

Now the major question remains - how can I engage my staff in a consideration of the expected ethos of the Catholic School?

Recognise straight away that you may never succeed in getting every staff member to engage. But there is currently a golden opportunity to have a discussion around all these issues and gospel values as you work on your Mission Statement as part of the school development planning process.

And of course the most important part of working towards a Mission Statement is indeed the process. The process should facilitate a review of the reality of the school, a sharing of understanding about the school, a reflective conversation, about what you aim to do within the school and hopefully a renewed commitment by all the school community to the education to be provided in the particular school. Of course, the essential thing about the Mission Statement is that it be REAL, that the staff and Board of Management and parents and pupils feel part of it and feel that it reflects the actual accepted aim and manner of proceeding in their school. Outsiders who read your Mission Statement should be able to say 'yes, that reflects my perception of the school; it describes what I experience and observe in and from that school'. There are various methods suggested for arriving at a Mission Statement but this is not our task this evening.

Neither is this meeting to discuss legal structures. However, it is good for us to note that the legal framework has been laid down and it is favourable to our denominational schools. The characteristic spirit of the school is recognised and honoured in various pieces of legislation and will be included again in the evaluation of the school management and the

schools performance. We have secured the legal framework. However, that of itself is not sufficient.

'Key to the mission (of denominational schools) is the fostering of an ethos or characteristic spirit based primarily on religious belief. The legal right to do this is secure. But the preservation of the ethos of schools does not depend on law alone. Increasingly, it must involve the support and commitment of those, other than the owners, who participate in schools. This can only be secured in an environment where the (education) partners are involved in a meaningful way in the affairs of the school and believe that their contribution is valued'.

These are the words, not of a Bishop - but of our former Minister for Education, Micheál Martin. You are the leaders of specifically Catholic schools. The State allows it - the Church expects it - the pupils deserve it.

Let me finish with a metaphor for your rôle. My religious congregation has a number of schools in Kenya and I have met Kenyan Sisters in various gatherings. Kenyan culture, as you know, is rich with tribal symbols. One such symbol spoke powerfully to me about education and the Principal's rôle.

In Kenyan tribal culture, in the compound of the extended family, it is always one person's duty to be the keeper of the fire, so that the fire will never go out and the food is always kept hot ready for serving.

For me the fire represents the vision and values which must be kept constantly alight in the hearts of teachers, students and parents. If the fire goes out then as the Book of Proverbs tells us 'the people without a vision get out of hand' (proverbs 29:18.)

Just as a crowd always gathers around a good fire, when the vision and values of a school are clearly named, often articulated and made concrete in the day to day life of the school, students, parents and the local community will gather around the teachers. As my colleague, Pat Murray IBVM, pointed out, research has shown that such a school will be a vibrant community with committed students, teachers and parents, which will achieve good academic results together with excellent personal, social, religious and spiritual development.

And isn't that what it's all about?

GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMULATION OF AN ETHOS STATEMENT IN A CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

All Catholic primary schools established before 1997 are subject to a lease signed when the school was set up. This lease included an undertaking that the school would be managed in accordance with the Rules for National Schools. In 1997, the patrons and the Minister for Education agreed (following discussions with the education ‘partners’) to vary the terms of the existing lease. The new document (Deed of Variation), which supplements the original lease, provides that the school will be managed in accordance with the rules laid down by the Minister of Education and in accordance with a Roman Catholic Ethos. This Deed of Variation for Catholic Primary Schools contains a schedule [Cf. page 61]

All Catholic primary schools have been required, since January 2002, to display the Schedule for a Catholic school in a prominent place in the school. The Schedule is the agreed document between the Bishops, the CPSMA, the INTO, the National Parents’ Council and the Department of Education and Skills. This Schedule must be included in all school policies e.g. in the school’s admission policy and in the criteria for the appointment of all school staff.

Resulting from the Deed of Variation for Catholic primary schools and from the Schedule to the deed, Catholic primary schools arrive at ethos statements. Catholic primary schools that are run by religious congregations usually consult a charter embodying the charism of the founder/foundress when drawing up their ethos statements. Some parish schools consult the mission statement of the parish pastoral council when composing their statement. These ‘ethos statements’ are also called vision statements or mission statements.

In drawing up an ethos statement Catholic schools in Ireland should refer to the following important documents:

1. The Schedule for Catholic Primary School
2. Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference (2 October 2007) Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future
3. Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference (12 May 2008) Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland
4. Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference (5 January 2011) Share the Good News – National Directory for Catechesis

Sources

- i. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977) The Catholic School
- ii. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982) Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to Faith
- iii. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1983) Educational Guidance in Human Love
- iv. Flannery A. (1988) Documents of the Second Vatican Council. Gravissimum Educationis: Declaration on Education
- v. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988) The Religious dimension of the Education in a Catholic School
- vi. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (December 28, 1997) The Catholic School
- vii. Congregation for the Clergy (August 11, 1997) General Directory for Catechesis
- viii. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (November 20, 2002) Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools

- ix. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (September 8, 2007). Educating Together in Catholic Schools. A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful
- x. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (May 5, 2009) Circular letter to the Presidents of Bishops' conferences on religious education.

THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBES BEST PRACTICE IN FORMULATING AN ETHOS STATEMENT FOR A CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL:

- (i) The Board of Management establishes a sub-committee including the principal, the chairperson and one other Board member along with the school chaplain to prepare the elements of an Ethos/Mission Statement. The elements are taken from the Schedule for the Catholic School and other relevant documents (charism of religious congregation, mission statement of parish pastoral council etc.). These elements constitute a 'Formation Document'.
- (ii) The 'Formation Document' is then presented to the Board of Management. The Board approves or amends this formation document. All the members of staff (teaching staff and ancillary staff) are then invited to discuss the approved/amended document.
- (iii) The members of staff either approve or further amend the formation document as presented to them by the Board.
- (iv) Following staff consultation the approved/amended formation document is once more discussed by the Board of Management. The Board approves or amends the document further.

- (v) At this stage the amended formation document is forwarded to the school's parents' council/parents' association for approval, amendment or additions.
- (vi) Following consultation with the parents, the Board asks the original sub-committee (mentioned at (i) above) to prepare a draft ethos/mission statement.
- (vii) After approving the draft ethos/mission statement the Board then sends it to the school patron and to the trustees (i.e. the religious congregation for approval).
- (viii) The Board of Management then presents the approved ethos/mission statement to all the school staff and to the parents.
- (ix) The ethos/mission statement is displayed prominently in each classroom and in the public areas of the school. It should be displayed in the school lobby alongside the Schedule.

The above procedure takes between six and eighteen months. When completed, the resulting ethos/mission statement is not fixed for all time but should be revisited at suitable intervals.

DEED OF VARIATION FOR CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Note: All Catholic primary schools established before 1997 are subject to a lease signed when the school was set up. This lease included an undertaking that the school would be managed in accordance with the Rules for National Schools.

In 1997, the patrons and the Minister for Education agreed (following discussions with the education partners) to vary the terms of the existing leases. The new document (Deed of Variation), which supplements the original lease, provides that the school will be managed in accordance with the rules laid down by the Minister for Education and in accordance with a Roman Catholic Ethos.

The new agreement will also be used in the case of all Catholic primary schools established in the future. Members of Boards of Management should make themselves familiar with the terms of the Deed of Variation. In particular, paragraphs A and B and the Schedule to the Deed of Variation should be noted.

WHEREAS:-

1. By the Lease, the Lessors, in order to promote the establishment of a National School at _____, which National School is known as _____ (hereinafter called “the School”), demised the plot of ground upon which the School is now erected (hereinafter called “the Demised Premises”) to the Trustees for the term of _____ years from the ____ day of _____ 19____, upon the trusts therein and subject to the yearly rent thereby reserved.
2. The Minister, in order to promote the establishment of the School, approved the payment of certain monies by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland out of funds provided by the Oireachtas for the erection of National Schools in Ireland toward the erection of the School.
3. The School is managed in accordance with the Rules for National Schools under the Department of Education and Science published from time to time by that Department, and the Patron of the School whose rights and obligations are as defined in the said Rules is the Archbishop of _____ and his successor as such Archbishop (hereinafter called “the Patron”).
4. The Lease was made by the Lessors to the Trustees, as the Present Trustees hereby acknowledge, to erect and maintain not merely a National School in connection with the Minister on the plot of ground thereby demised, but a National School in connection with the Minister adopting and reflecting in its management and in the education, whether moral, intellectual or social, offered and given by it in the School to the children attending thereat, a Roman Catholic ethos.
5. The Minister is desirous that every National School in the State should be placed under the management of a Board of Management and it is proposed that a minority only of such Board of Management should be nominated by the Patron.
6. The Present Trustees, with the approbation of the Minister as testified by his being a party hereto and with the consent in writing of the Land Owners as testified by their being a party hereto and executing these presents, are desirous of revoking the trust in the Lease to the effect that a National School in connection with the Minister shall at all times during the term thereby demised,

be maintained upon the Demised Premises and in lieu thereof, declaring a new Trust that a National School in connection with the Minister adopting and reflecting in its management and in the education, whether moral, intellectual or social, offered and given by it in the School to the children attending thereat, a Roman Catholic ethos shall, during the term of the Lease and any renewal thereof, be maintained upon the Demised Premises and otherwise on the like Trusts as are declared in the Lease.

NOW THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that in pursuance of the said desire

A. The Present Trustees, with the approbation of the Minister as testified by his being a party hereto and with the Consent of the Land Owners as testified by their being a party hereto and executing these presents, **HEREBY REVOKE** that part of the Trusts declared by the Lease to the effect that “a National School in connection with the Minister shall at all times, during the term demised by the Lease, be maintained upon the Demised Premises”.

(a) The Minister **HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGES** that the Lessors are office holders and dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of _____, and as such are, inter alia, responsible for the management of the affairs of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese, and for the administration and control of religious and education institutions of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese, whether directly or through a Board of Guardians or Trustees, and for promoting and protecting the religious ethos of the Roman Catholic faith in the School.

(b) The Minister Recognises and Acknowledges that the religious ethos of the school is that of the Roman Catholic Faith and covenants with the Lessors not to interfere with or seek to interfere with the Lessors or the Present Trustees in preserving the religious ethos of the School and not to change such religious ethos.

(c) In further pursuance of the said desire the Present Trustees, with the consent of the Land Owners as testified by their being a party hereto, **HEREBY DECLARE** that the Demised Premises and the School are now and shall henceforth during the term demised by the Lease and any Renewal thereof which may be made, be Held Upon Trust that a National School in connection with the Minister adopting and reflecting in its management and in the education, whether moral, intellectual, or social offered and given by it in the School to the children attending thereat, with a Roman Catholic ethos (i.e. an ethos in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church) shall at all times during the term aforesaid, and any Renewal thereof, be maintained upon the said premises and school and otherwise on the like Trusts as are declared by the Lease.

B. 1. The Present Trustees, for themselves, their successors and assigns, hereby **COVENANT** with the Land Owners, their successors and assigns, that they, the Present Trustees, their Successors and Assigns, shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that any Board of Management which may, from time to time, be appointed in accordance with the Instrument of Management to manage the School (hereinafter called “the Board of Management” and references herein to a Board of Management shall be construed accordingly) shall, firstly,

manage the School in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Faith insofar as the same relates to education and schools and, thirdly, shall manage and cause the School to be managed in a manner which will uphold and foster such ethos and, fourthly, shall not do anything or permit anything to be done in relation to the School, or the management thereof, which would have or would be likely to have a detrimental effect on the Roman Catholic Ethos of the School.

2. For the guidance only of the Present Trustees and the Board of Management, and Without Prejudice to the right of the Land Owners from time to time to state what they consider to be the essential requirements then prevailing for a National School purporting to have a Roman Catholic ethos or reflecting a Roman Catholic ethos, a synopsis or guideline of what are the fundamental elements of such an ethos is stated in the Schedule hereto.
3. In the event of the Board of Management adopting and maintaining a decision or strategy which is, in the opinion of the Land Owners, contrary to or in breach of the Trusts hereinbefore and in the Lease declared or prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School, they, the Land Owners, shall notify the Present Trustees in writing of what decision or strategy they consider to be contrary to or in breach of the said Trusts or prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School and require the Present Trustees to take all reasonable steps to procure the alteration by the Board of Management, within the period of six weeks from the date thereof, of their decision or strategy and the substitution in lieu thereof of a decision or strategy which reflects and is in accordance with the said Trusts and the Roman Catholic ethos of the School.
4. In the event of the Board of Management, within the period of two weeks after receipt by them of notification from the Present Trustees that the Land Owners consider a particular decision or strategy to be contrary or in breach of the trusts hereinbefore and in the Lease declared or prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School, contending that the decision or strategy, as the case may be, which has been or may have been adopted by them, is not contrary to or in breach of the said trusts or not prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School, the Present Trustees shall request the Board of Management to communicate their arguments forthwith, in writing, to the Present Trustees as to why and how they contend that their decision or strategy is not contrary to or in breach of the said Trusts or not prejudicial to the Roman Catholic ethos of the School and the Present Trustees shall forthwith transmit such writing to the Land Owners, who shall consider such arguments within the period of three weeks from the date of receipt thereof by them. In the event of the Land Owners upholding the decision or strategy of the Board of Management, they shall notify the Present Trustees accordingly and the Present Trustees shall, in turn, notify the Board of Management of the Land Owners' decision. In the event of the Land Owners rejecting the arguments of the Board of Management, they shall notify the Present Trustees accordingly and the Present Trustees shall request the Board of Management to alter their original decision or strategy so as to reflect and be in accordance with the decision expressed by the Land Owners within the period of four weeks or receipt by them, the Board of Management, of the said Decision of the Land Owners.

C. In the event of the Board of Management being requested to alter any of their decisions or strategies in accordance with the provisions hereinbefore contained and their refusing or failing to do so within the time hereinbefore specified, the Present Trustees, for themselves, their Successors and Assigns, hereby Agree and Undertake with the Land Owners that they shall, in such event and for the reasons so stated and with the Approval of the Minister, request the Patron to dissolve the Board of Management and to appoint a new Board of Management for the School.

D. It is hereby Agreed and Declared that these Presents and the Lease shall be read and construed together.

IN WITNESS whereof the parties of the First and Second Parts have hereunto have set their hands and affixed their seals and the Seal of the Minister has been affixed hereto the day and year first hereinbefore **WRITTEN**.

SCHEDULE

A Roman Catholic School (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The School models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic School provides Religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED by the **LAND OWNERS** in the presence of:

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED by the **PRESENT TRUSTEES** in the presence of:

PRESENT when the Seal of the **MINISTER** was affixed hereto:

Dated this day of 20

..... First Part

..... Second Part

And

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

..... Third Part

RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS TO TEACH CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE ISLAND OF IRELAND

[As advised by the Irish Episcopal Conference]

Introduction

The Certificate programmes in Catholic Religious Education and Religious Studies provided by a number of Centres in Ireland (North and South) and recognised by the Episcopal Conference (Section C), offer pre-service and qualified teachers foundational knowledge and skills for communicating the Catholic faith to children in Primary schools. These programmes enable schools and their teachers to address the many spiritual and religious opportunities and challenges facing pupils in contemporary Ireland.

The programme presents a summary of the Catholic faith which enables teachers to teach it in a child-centred, developmentally appropriate manner while simultaneously exploring issues surrounding Catholic identity, interculturalism, religious diversity and the importance of promoting respect for all pupils.

In outlining its Specific Aims, the 1999 Curriculum states that one of its purposes is to *“enable children to develop spiritual, moral and religious values”* (p.34). The Curriculum also emphasizes that among its general objectives it intends to develop a knowledge and understanding of the pupil’s *“own religious traditions and beliefs, with respect for the religious traditions and beliefs of others”* (p. 36). Religious Education makes a significant contribution to the holistic development of the primary school child and enables the child to develop ethically, spiritually and religiously. The 1999 Curriculum also states:

“In seeking to develop the full potential of the individual, the curriculum takes into account the child’s affective, aesthetic, spiritual, moral and religious needs...Religious education specifically enables the child to develop spiritual and moral values and to come to a knowledge of God” (p. 58).

Reflecting the provisions of the Irish Constitution, especially articles 42 and 44, as well as the 1998 Education Act, the Religious Education Programme will be taught in accordance with the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school. Catholic Religious Education nurtures the faith of children and is grounded in the person of Jesus Christ, in scripture and in the teaching of the Catholic Church (CCC5). It aims to initiate children into the fullness of Christian life and to enable them to flourish as human beings. Catholic Religious Education explicitly supports and supplements other programmes in the school curriculum such as SPHE, RSE and Intercultural Guidelines (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Irish National Teachers’ Organisation, Department of Education and Skills). The Religious Education Programme is taught in a manner that complements other curricular areas such as SESE (History, Geography, Science), Visual Arts, Music, Drama, Literature and SPHE. It also seeks to acquaint students with the inclusive, ecumenical and interreligious perspectives of the Second Vatican Council.

In this way the Religious Education programme in Catholic schools plays a pivotal role in the integration of all subjects in the primary school curriculum by promoting the holistic development of pupils: physical; ethical; spiritual; religious. This is done in a manner that mirrors the provisions of the Irish Constitution, the Rules for National Schools,

the 1998 Education Act, and the CPSMA Handbook.

The word Catholic comes from the Greek adverbial phrase *kath'holou*, and means 'according to the whole', with connotations of inclusivity, universality and completeness. Accordingly Catholic education seeks to promote knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith tradition while it simultaneously acknowledges, welcomes and accommodates pupils of other faiths and other traditions. The Catholic school is committed to the promotion of equality, respect and inclusivity as well as serving the needs of those on the margins of society. It also recognizes that faith is always a free act and cannot be imposed. In addition it respects the right of every child to religious freedom and choice which has its foundation in the dignity of the human person (*Dignitatis Humanae* Par 2). The Catholic school particularly acknowledges that parents are the primary educators and therefore seeks to respect their wishes.

In Catholic schools Religious Education integrates the many branches of learning within the 1999 Curriculum into a multi-coloured mosaic; it embraces diversity as a Christian and educational value; it fosters respect for differences in culture and religion on the basis of the dignity of every human being, and it explicitly promotes a spirit of fairness, a concern for all who are in need, and the value of forgiveness in relationships.

General Principles:

- Religious Education is a curriculum area in the Primary School Curriculum, both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland.
- Religious Education and ethical formation contributes to the integrated learning that is encouraged across the curriculum for Primary school children.

- In both jurisdictions the content of the curriculum for Religious Education remains the responsibility of the different Church authorities/patron bodies.
- The academic freedom of the various Universities and Colleges of Education providing teacher education programmes is an important value, allowing Colleges to determine how they respond to the requirement to address Religious Education as part of their B.Ed. (or equivalent qualification) and whatever Certificate (or equivalent qualification) they make available in Theological or Religious Studies.
- The study themes below, required to teach Religious Education in a Catholic School, are to be considered interactive and complementary rather than isolated and should be studied in a manner that encourages integration.
- The requirements set out below are effective from September 2011 forward, without prejudice to those who qualified as primary teachers prior to this date in any of the approved centres listed in Section C of this document.

A/ UNDERGRADUATE:

For a teacher with an initial teacher education degree to be recognised to teach in a Catholic school they should have 120 contact hours* in the area of Religious Education, to include an exploration of Catechesis and Catholic Religious Education, (hours of Religious or Theological subjects, in the B.Ed. or other degree), and of Religious or Theological Studies (taken in an additional Certificate). The prescribed areas for study include:

I. Religious Education:

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and appreciation in a manner that indicates a professional approach to:

1. The rationale and aims of Religious Education in Catholic Primary schools in Ireland, including an understanding of the development of the child's linguistic, psychological, spiritual, ethical and moral readiness to engage progressively with their religious tradition.
2. The Religious Education and ethical formation of Catholic pupils as set out in the National Directory for Catechesis and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
3. The current syllabus/curriculum in Religious Education designated by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.
4. The programme(s) and/or materials approved for use in Catholic Schools.
5. The vision of the person, community and civil society embraced by the Catholic Church including the distinctive features of Catholic Education.
6. Short and long term planning for the teaching of Religious Education in Catholic Primary schools in the Island of Ireland.

II. Theology:

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and appreciation in the following fields of study:

1. God; Faith, Creed and Trinity
2. Jesus Christ and discipleship
3. Scripture
4. Prayer, Sacraments and Liturgy
5. Ethics, Social Justice and Spirituality and Human Rights

6. Church and Mission, Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue

These themes allow for inclusion of many current issues, such as social justice, peace and reconciliation, gender, ethics, ecology, equality, disability, sexuality, racial, cultural and religious diversity, citizenship.

** The hours enumerated in this document are the number of hours recognised by the Catechetics Council. However some centres of provision offer more than the stipulated hours and this is to be encouraged.*

B/ POSTGRADUATE:

For postgraduate students to be recognised to teach in a Catholic school in Ireland they should have 50 contact hours* at postgraduate level in the area of Religious Education, to include exploration of Catechesis and Catholic Religious Education and Religious or Theological Studies (hours of Religious or Theological subjects, in the Graduate Diploma or other degree). Areas to be studied should include:

I. Religious Education:

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and appreciation in a manner that indicates a professional approach to:

1. The rationale, aims, and short and long term planning involved in Religious Education in Catholic Primary schools in Ireland.
2. The National Directory for Catechesis, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the syllabus/curriculum in Religious Education designated by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and the programme(s) and/or materials approved for use in Catholic Schools.

3. The vision of the person, community and civil society embraced by the Catholic Church including the distinctive features of Catholic Education.

II. Theology

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and appreciation in the following fields of study:

1. God; Faith, Creed and Trinity
2. Jesus Christ and Scripture
3. A minimum of one of following four modules (depending on the Provider and its resources):
 - Prayer, Sacraments and Liturgy
 - Spirituality and Morality
 - Church and Mission and Ecumenism
 - World Religions

** The hours enumerated in this document are the number of hours recognised by the Catechetics Council. However some centres of provision offer more than the stipulated hours and this is to be encouraged.*

C/ QUALIFICATIONS

The Council currently recognises the following providers of this programme Catechetics in Religious Education, or its equivalent, as outlined above:

- Froebel Certificate in Religious Education
- Coláiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education Certificate in Religious Education
- Saint Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Certificate in Religious Studies
- Mary Immaculate College Certificate in Religious Education

- St. Mary's University College, Belfast, Certificate in Religious Education
- University of Coleraine, Certificate in Religious Education
- St. Angela's College, Sligo

To ensure that the highest academic standards prevail, all Certificate programmes will be reviewed by suitably qualified external examiners, appointed in accordance with the academic procedures in each of the respective Colleges. In the case of new or reaccredited programmes, an independent assessor, nominated by the Catechetical Council, should be consulted and may advise on changes to ensure conformity with the requirements of this document. The external assessor will report to the Catechetics Council on completion of the consultation.

It is envisaged that this Certificate should be located on Level 7 of the NQAI framework, Special Purpose Certificate Award (24-30 Credits). Further consultation and dialogue needs to take place in this regard.

Institutions wishing to apply for recognition of their programmes must send details of their programmes (course outlines, learning outcomes, contact hours, and bibliographies) to the **Council for Catechetics of the Irish Episcopal Conference**.

This document was approved at the September 2011 General Meeting of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

For further information please contact:

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RELIGIOUS QUALIFICATIONS – GUIDANCE NOTE FOR BOARDS

[As advised by the Irish Episcopal Conference]

1. At the September 2011 General Meeting of the Irish Episcopal Conference the document Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland was approved.
2. A Certificate in Religious Education, or its equivalent, is a condition for employment as a teacher in a Catholic Primary School.
3. The Council for Catechetics of the Irish Episcopal Conference has established a sub-committee with the responsibility to decide in particular situations what would be considered an equivalent to the Certificate in Religious Education.
4. With regard to the implementation of the document, Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland a twelve month phasing-in period is to be observed.
5. In certain cases teachers will be allowed time to obtain the Certificate or its equivalent following their appointment.
6. The document, Recognition of Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland, should not be used to disadvantage teachers appointed prior to its approval and adoption as a standard for all Dioceses.
7. Boards of Management are required to seek prior approval for all appointments from their patron's office. Any issues pertaining to 'Qualifications to Teach Catholic Religious Education in Catholic Primary Schools in the Island of Ireland' should be addressed at this stage.

SECTION 3

The Board of Management

Overview

This section deals with the following:

- Functions of a school
- Functions of a Board
- Procedure for the Establishment and Membership of Boards of Management
- Procedures for the appointment of a new member to Board
- The Board of Management in action
- Sample Agenda
- Sample Treasurer's Report
- Roles within an Effective and Efficient Board of Management
- Dissolution by the Patron
- Dissolution at the request of Minister for Education and Skills
- Report on operation of the Board of Management
- Report and Information to School Community
- The School Plan
- Use of National Schools
- Use of National Schools & Insurance
- Finance
- The Board of Management and Others

Boards of Management are appointed for a term of four years. The term of office for the current members of Boards of Management is 1st December 2011 to 30th November 2015.

FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL - SECTION 9 EDUCATION ACT 1998

S.9 - a recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall use its available resources to-

- (a) ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with a disability or other special educational needs, are identified and provided for,
- (b) ensure that the education provided by it meets the requirements of education policy as determined from time to time by the Minister including requirements as to the provision of a curriculum as prescribed by the Minister in accordance with section 30,
- (c) ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices,
- (d) promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school,
- (e) promote equality of opportunity for both male and female students and staff of the school,
- (f) promote the development of the Irish language and traditions, Irish literature, the arts and other cultural matters,
- (g) ensure that parents of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of eighteen years, the student, have access in the prescribed manner to records kept by that school relating to the progress of that student in his or her education,

- (h) in the case of schools located in a Gaeltacht area, contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language,
- (i) conduct its activities in compliance with any regulations made from time to time by the Minister under section 33,
- (j) ensure that the needs of personnel involved in management functions and staff development needs generally in the school are identified and provided for,
- (k) establish and maintain systems whereby the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations can be assessed, including the quality and effectiveness of teaching in the school and the attainment levels and academic standards of students,
- (l) establish or maintain contacts with other schools and at other appropriate levels throughout the community served by the school, and
- (m) subject to this Act and in particular section 15 (2) (d), establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school.

FUNCTIONS OF A BOARD OF MANAGEMENT - SECTION 15 EDUCATION ACT 1998

S.15

- (1) It shall be the duty of a board to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.
- (2) A board shall perform the functions

conferred on it and on a school by this Act and in carrying out its functions the board shall-

- (a) do so in accordance with the policies determined by the Minister from time to time,
- (b) uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school, and at all times act in accordance with any Act of the Oireachtas or instrument made thereunder, deed, charter, articles management or other such instrument relating to the establishment or operation of the school,
- (c) consult with and keep the patron informed of decisions and proposals of the board,
- (d) publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time

to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with,

- (e) have regard to the principles and requirements of a democratic society and have respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society,
 - (f) have regard to the efficient use of resources (and, in particular, the efficient use of grants provided under section 12), the public interest in the affairs of the school and accountability to students, their parents, the patron, staff and the community served by the school, and
 - (g) use the resources provided to the school from monies provided by the Oireachtas to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with a disability or other special educational needs, including, where necessary, alteration of buildings and provision of appropriate equipment.
- (3) For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in the Act shall confer or be deemed to confer on the board any right over or interest in the land and buildings of the school for which the board is responsible.

PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP OF BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT

Section 14 Education Act 1998

- 14(1) It shall be the duty of a patron, for the purposes of ensuring that a recognised school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint where practicable a board of management the composition of which is agreed between patrons of schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers and the Minister.
- (2) A board established in accordance with subsection (1) shall fulfil in respect of the school the functions assigned to that school by this Act, and, except in the case of a school established or maintained by a vocational education committee, each board shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and power to sue and may be sued in its corporate name.
- (3) Pending the establishment of a board as provided for by subsection (1) the persons who have responsibilities under the structures and systems in place in a school for the management of that school at the commencement of this Part, including boards of governors, shall, as appropriate, discharge the functions of a board under this Act.
- (4) The members of a board shall, except where articles of management otherwise provide, be appointed by the patron of the school.

- (5) When making appointments to a board established in accordance with subsection (1) the patron shall comply with directions given by the Minister in respect of an appropriate gender balance and the Minister, before giving any such directions, shall consult with patrons, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers.
- (6) The Minister, with the agreement of the patron, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, shall prescribe matters relating to the appointment of a board.
- (7) Except as provided by this Act, no action shall lie against a member of a board in respect of anything done by that member in good faith and in pursuance of this Act or any regulations made by the Minister under this Act.
- (8) Where a patron determines that the appointment of a board in accordance with subsection (1) is not practicable, the patron shall inform the parents of students, the teachers and other staff of the school and the Minister of that fact and the reasons therefor at the time of such determination and, thereafter, if a board is not so appointed, the patron shall, from time to time or as requested by the Minister, inform the parents, teachers and other staff and the Minister of the reasons therefor.

PROCEDURES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW MEMBER TO A BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

[Refer to Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011, Clauses 3-12 at pages 12-22]

Teacher Nominee

Refer to p. 31 Appendix A 'Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011'

Parent Nominee – Option A

Refer to p.32-33, Appendix B 'Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011'

Parent Nominee – Option B

Refer to p.32 & p.34 Appendix B 'Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011'

Community Nominees

Refer to p. 35-37, Appendix C 'Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011'

** available on www.cpsma.ie*

[Patron Nominees are appointed by the Bishop]

CPSMA Guidance Notes on formation of new Boards of Management and Template letters are available on www.cpsma.ie – Guidance Note Section

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT IN ACTION

Frequency of Meetings

Refer to page 22 of Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

First Meeting

Refer to page 22 of Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Ordinary Meetings

Refer to pages 22 & 23 of Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Requested Meetings

Refer to page 23 of Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Emergency Meetings

Refer to pages 23 & 24 of Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Disclosure of Interest/Integrity of Board Proceedings

Refer to pages 24 & 25 of Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

** available on www.cpsma.ie*

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING

ST. _____ NATIONAL SCHOOL

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING
DD/MM/YEAR

1. Opening Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Minutes - Previous Meeting
4. Matters Arising
5. Correspondence
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Principal Teacher's Report (Cf. Pages 82 - 83)
 - a. Attendance of Pupils (NEWB)
 - b. Child Protection (See DES Circular 65/2011 & Child Protection Procedures 2011)*
 - c. Literacy & Numeracy (See DES Circular 56/2011)*
 - d. Policies for Ratification
8. Agreed Report
9. Date of Next Meeting

*Required

1. Opening Prayer

The Board members ask the blessing of God on their work for the children of the school for which they have responsibility.

Any bereavements or special needs would be noted at this point.

A different member of the Board could be invited to lead the group in a short prayer at each meeting.

2. Apologies

The attendance/non-attendance and apologies of members at the meeting should be noted in the minutes.

[Note Clause 7 (d) (i) of the Constitution of Boards & Rules of Procedure 2011, states that if a member is absent from three consecutive ordinary Board meetings, unless such absence was approved by the Board of Management, that member's office shall become vacant and shall be filled, as soon as may be after the vacancy occurring, by a new member appointed in the same manner as that in which the vacating member was appointed.]

3. Minutes

(See Clause 11 at p. 19 - 21 and Clause 13(c) (ix) at p. 23 of Constitution of Boards & Rules of Procedure 2011).

The minutes are drawn up by the secretary/recording secretary.

It is essential to record decisions arrived at by the Board and any votes taken. It is generally not necessary to record details of the discussion of the Board.

The Board will decide how to convey the minutes to the members bearing in mind the implications of Data Protection legislation.

When Board members agree that the minutes are an accurate and complete record of the business of the previous meeting, the chairperson signs the official copy, which is retained in a safe place and must be made available on request to representatives of the patron, the Trustees and/or the DES. All other copies [if any exist] should be collected by the Chairperson and shredded.

4. Matters Arising

The chairperson and/or Board members check to ensure that any decision taken at the previous meeting has been implemented.

If any matter arising from the minutes requires a long discussion, it may more appropriately be dealt with under another heading on the agenda.

5. Correspondence

If there is a considerable amount of correspondence, it can be helpful to have a list prepared for each Board member. This would merely state the origin and the subject matter of each item of correspondence.

The Board should be made aware of all correspondence addressed to the chairperson. Any letters of complaints must be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures.

The principal teacher may properly deal with correspondence if addressed to him/her, or she/he may decide to bring the matter to the attention of the Board for their information or to seek the advice of Board members.

Much of the correspondence needs simply to be noted by the Board of Management. This can be indicated on the list of correspondence. Other items may need some discussion and decision by the Board.

If a letter is received from a solicitor, it is advisable to get legal advice before replying. The Insurance Company must be informed and authorisation sought for legal advice. The letter should not be responded to until this has been done.

6. Finance – Treasurer’s Report

[cf. pages 90-92 & 166-167]

The treasurer’s report should be presented at every Board meeting. The report should indicate:

- The true bank balance at the end of the preceding calendar month (i.e. bank statement less any outstanding uncashed cheques);
- Payments that have been made since the issuing of the bank statement plus payments that will fall due before the next Board meeting;
- Any income due in the same period.

On the basis of this information, the Board of Management will be in a position to consider the financial situation of the school and to make decisions about items of expenditure that may be considered necessary or desirable. The Board of Management should refer regularly to the section on finance in the Constitution of Boards & Rules of Procedure 2011 [pages 26-29].

SAMPLE TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

Source www.education.ie

Financial Report for the Month ended 31 Oct 2011

School: _____

Code	Receipts		THIS MONTH	RECEIVED 1 Sept TO DATE	BUDGET	Code	Payments		THIS MONTH	EXPENDED 1 Sept TO DATE	BUDGET
1.0	D.E.S. GRANTS			1 Sept TO DATE		12.0	EDUCATION				
1.1	Capitation Grant					12.1	Consumable Materials				
1.2	Disadvantaged Area Grant					12.2	Teaching Aids				
1.3	Home/School Liaison Grant					12.3	Library				
1.4	Learning Support Grant					12.4	Games				
1.5	EAL Grant					12.5	Books (Free Book Scheme)				
1.6	Free Book Grant					12.6	Books (Rental Scheme)				
1.7	Traveller Grant					12.7	Learning Support				
1.8	Special Needs Grant					12.8	Photocopying				
1.9	I.C.T. Grant					12.9	DEIS				
1.10	Resource Grant					12.10	Resource				
1.11	Curriculum Grant					12.11	Early Start				
1.12	Giving Children Even Break					12.12	Curriculum				
1.13	DEIS Grant					12.13	Giving Children Even Break				
1.14	Early Start Grant					12.14	Minor Works				
1.15	Minor Works Grant					12.15	Traveller				
1.16	Supervision Grant					12.16	Special Needs				
1.17	Other (Specify)					12.17	I.C.T.				
2.0	FUNDED EMPLOYMENT					12.18	EAL Grant				
2.1	Secretarial Grant					13.0	REPAIRS/MAINTENANCE				
2.2	Caretaker Grant					13.1	Buildings and Grounds				
3.0	SPECIFIC GRANTS					13.2	Furniture, Fittings, Equipment				
3.1	Capital Grants					13.3	Maintenance Wages				
3.2	Summer Works Scheme					14.0	ESTABLISHMENT				

3.3	Other Department Grants					14.1	Rates				
3.4	School Meals					14.2	Insurance				
4.0	OTHER					14.3	Light and Power				
4.1	Bank Interest					14.4	Heating				
4.2	Book Rental Scheme					14.5	Cleaning Materials				
4.3	Reimbursable Receipts					14.6	Cleaning Wages/Contract				
4.4	Insurance Claims					15.0	ADMINISTRATION				
4.5	Account Transfers					15.1	Secretarial Salaries				
4.6	Sundry					15.2	Printing & Stationery				
5.0	TOTAL RECEIPTS					15.3	Postage & Telephone				
						15.4	Professional Fees				
						15.6	Training Courses / In-service				
						16.0	FINANCE				
	Opening Balance at 1 Sept 2011				0.00	16.1	Bank Interest and Charges				
5.0	Add: Receipts for the Month				0.00	16.2	Loan Repayments				
19.0	Less: Payments for the Month				0.00	17.0	OTHER				
						17.1	Reimbursable Payments				
						17.2	Petty Cash				
						17.3	Account Transfers				
						17.4	Revenue Commissioners				
						17.5	Supervision				
						17.6	Sundry				
						18.0	CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
						18.1	Buildings				
						18.2	Furniture, Fittings, Equipment				
						18.3	Summer Works Scheme				
						19.0	TOTAL PAYMENTS				
	Closing Balance at 31 Oct 2011				€0.00						

7. Principal Teacher's Report

This is the part of the meeting during which the principal teacher enables the Board of Management to become familiar with the life and functioning of the school. It also enables the principal teacher to avail of the advice and views of the Board members. Both the principal teacher and the Board members should be familiar with the terms of DES Circular 16/73, section 22 and section 23 Education Act 1998. [cf. pages 101-106]

The principal teacher reports to the Board on a wide range of issues that may vary according to the time of the year. These issues must include a report in regard to Child Protection as follows:

- The principal's report shall state the number of reports made to the HSE by the DLP, since the last Board meeting. The principal's report shall state only the number and not include any other details;
- The principal's report shall also state the number of cases, since the last Board meeting, where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made. The principal's report shall state only the number and not include any other details;
- Where there were no such cases at 1 or 2, state this fact;
- The minutes of the Board meeting shall record the above.

Other matters which may be included are:

- **Literacy numeracy progress report** [in accordance with DES Circular 56/2011 available on www.cpsma.ie]
- **Enrolment:** [cf. pages 196-202]
 - Intake of new pupils – numbers etc.
 - Enrolment procedures
 - Projection of enrolments for the following year(s) with any implications for accommodation, staffing etc.
- **Recruitment:** [cf. Section 4]
 - New teacher(s)
 - Posts of responsibility
 - Substitutes/temporary teachers appointed with the approval of the chairperson since the last meeting of the Board
 - OLCS report – e.g. absences etc [See p.30 Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011]
 - Deployment of additional (concessionary) teachers (if any)
 - Arrangements for substitution for absent teachers [See DES Circular 31/2011]
 - Identification of staff in-service needs
- **Buildings, Resources, Health & Safety:** [cf. pages 167-169]
 - Condition of the school premises or grounds
 - Any incident of behaviour, vandalism, any accident etc. that is of concern to the staff of the school
 - Provision of class requisites

- Fire drill
- School library – access to county library, mobile library etc.
- **Students:**
 - Placement of 6th class pupils in post-primary school
 - Retention of a particular pupil in any class [cf. DES Circular 32/2003 at page 203]
 - Service for children with special needs within the school
 - Proposals about any programmes, lectures etc., to be introduced for the pupils
 - Assessment of pupils, school reports
 - Availability of back-up services for children with special needs
 - Retreats, lectures etc. provided for pupils
 - Arrangements for supervision of pupils
 - Arrangements for parent/teacher meetings
 - Arrangement of classes (bigger schools, multi-grade schools etc.)
 - School outings
 - School uniform
 - The school calendar
 - Events that took place or are planned for the following month
 - Dates of mid-term breaks, holidays etc (school calendar)
 - School timetable
 - Code of behaviour/discipline for pupils

- **Parents:** [cf. Section 5]
 - Home/school liaison- formal and informal
- **Review of school transport** [cf. pages 204-205]
- **Policy Review**
- **The process of school planning, incorporating staff, parents and Board of Management members**
- **Curricular innovations, proposals etc.**
- **Any other item of information about which the principal teacher is concerned or that she/he judges is useful/necessary/interesting to pass on to Board members**

The relationship between the Board and the principal teacher should be one of openness, mutual loyalty and respect.

8. Agreed Report

Having regard to the requirement for Confidentiality (Clauses 8 and 9(c) of *Constitution of Boards & Rules of Procedure 2011* at p.18) the Board should decide at the end of each meeting what information may be disclosed, to whom, by whom, when and how. It is essential that all Board members respect confidentiality.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It can be helpful to agree the dates for all Board meetings for the year when the Board holds the first meeting of each academic year. The chairperson should remind Board members of the date of the next meeting. Dates should not be changed unless there is very good reason for doing so and then with the maximum notice possible. [See Clause 13(c) (ii) *Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* at page 22.]

If the schedule of meetings for the year has not been agreed, then at the end of each meeting the Board members decide when the next meeting will take place and at what time.

It is also advisable that the duration of time for a Board meeting is agreed and that such time limits not be exceeded without agreement at the start of a meeting or during a meeting, where it is anticipated that longer time than usual will be necessary.

ROLES WITHIN AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Below is a suggested 'menu' of delegated duties to share the workload of the Board between all members. Overall responsibility still rests collectively with the Board as a corporate unit.

Chairperson

Responsibilities include:

- Chairing Board of Management meetings
- Correspondence refer p. 25 of Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011
- Liaising with the principal teacher between meetings
- Recruitment and employment related issues for all school staff
- All capital projects – with trustees'/patron's approval
- Signatures for cheques with treasurer or other member nominated by Board of Management. [See Clause 21(c) *Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* at page 21.]

Principal Teacher

[See DES Circular 16/73, Section 22 and Section 23 Education Act 1998]

Responsibilities include:

- The day-to-day management of the school, staff and pupils
- All educational (teaching and learning) issues
- Providing leadership to the whole school community
- Preparing and monitoring annual budget with treasurer and chairperson
- Principal as Secretary to Board of Management – See DES Circular 79/2007 for detail of duties & Application Form - available on www.cpsma.ie

Secretary

An allowance is payable to principal teachers who act as secretaries to Boards of Management. A broad outline of the duties of the principal teacher acting as secretary to a Board of Management is set out in Circular 0079/2007. However, the list of duties outlined in the circular is not exhaustive and the Board of Management may include other duties as decided by the board from time to time.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the circular, the chairperson shall act as correspondent for the Board in accordance with Clause 16(a) of the *Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*.

In circumstances where the principal teacher of a school does not opt to take up the allowance payable for acting as secretary to a Board of Management;

- (a) The board shall elect a recording secretary from amongst its members.
- (b) The duties of the Recording Secretary are confined to:
 1. Keeping minutes of each meeting in an appropriate form to be retained in a safe place and to be available on request to representatives of the patron, the Trustees and the Department.
 2. Setting the agenda for meetings in consultation with the chairperson of the Board and the principal.
 3. Recording in the minutes decisions reached at meetings including the numbers of those voting for or against a motion.

Treasurer

(This section should be read in conjunction with Clause 12 pages 21-22 and Clause 19 pages 26-29 of *Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*)

Responsibilities include:

- Reporting to each Board of Management meeting on school finances
- Preparing an annual budget in consultation with the principal teacher and chairperson
- Liaising with principal/school secretary regarding bill payments and lodgements
- Liaising with book-keeper/accountant re. the preparation of accounts for annual returns
- Liaising with the bank re. school account.

Note: Where school credit cards are issued, clear concise guidelines regarding usage of such cards should be issued to each approved user. The issue of spending limits and security

of storage etc. should be clear to users. Statements should be reconciled and signed off on a monthly basis and should be accompanied by supporting receipts and details of the purpose for which the expense was incurred.

Other [Discretionary]

(a) **Maintenance Matters** - responsibilities include:

- Managing the cleaning staff, cleaning contractors and caretaking staff
- Organising the cleaning/maintenance, equipment and supplies.
- Other

(b) **Safety Matters** - responsibilities include:

- Board of Management's health and safety statement
- Provision of keys and alarm codes to staff of the school and other agreed users of the building
- The maintenance of an appropriate security and fire alarm systems
- Co-ordinating a list of out-of-hours key holders for the school in the event of alarm activation or access required for repairs and maintenance
- Hire of school premises to outside groups – security, arranging keys etc.
- Other.

(c) Sub-Committees

The Board of Management, particularly in bigger schools, will probably find it helpful to set up a number of sub-committees with specific mandates, e.g. finance sub-committee, maintenance sub-committee etc. Some committee members should be from the Board of Management, with the

possibility of co-opting a minority of members from outside the Board.

The terms of reference of any sub-committee should be agreed by the Board of Management and clearly stated in writing. Arrangements for accountability and reporting to the Board must also be stated in writing and adhered to.

Such sub-committees should exist for a specific purpose and for a specified limited period of time and **under no circumstances** should it replace the existing Board of Management.

DISSOLUTION BY THE PATRON – SECTION 16 EDUCATION ACT 1998

S.16

1. Subject to this section and to the consent of the Minister, the patron may:
 - (a) for good and valid reasons stated in writing to a member of a board of management remove that member from that office or;
 - (b) if satisfied that the functions of a board are not being effectively discharged, dissolve that board.
2. Where a patron proposes to remove a member of a board from that office or to dissolve a board, the patron shall inform that member or board by notice in writing of his or her intention and the reasons therefor.
3. If, at the end of a period of one month after the date of the notice provided for in subsection (2), the patron, having

considered any representations made to him or her by or on behalf of the member or the board, remains of the view that the member should be removed from office or that the board should be dissolved then the patron may, subject to the approval of the Minister, by notice in writing and stating the opinion of the patron and the reasons therefor, remove the member from office or dissolve the board as appropriate.

4. A copy of every notice issued under this section and any representations made to the patron shall be delivered to the Minister as soon as may be after it has been made.
5. Whenever the patron dissolves a board, the patron may, subject to the approval of the Minister, appoint any person or body of persons as the patron thinks fit to perform the functions of the board.
6. Where a patron removes a member of a board the resulting vacancy shall be filled in accordance with regulations made under section 14 (6).
7. The patron shall provide, in accordance with section 14, for the re-establishment of a board dissolved under subsection (1) not later than six months following the dissolution or such longer period as the patron, with the consent of the Minister, considers appropriate and when the new board has been established the functions of the dissolved board shall be re-vested in the new board and shall cease to be functions of the person or body of persons, if any, appointed under subsection (5).

DISSOLUTION BY THE MINISTER – SECTION 17 EDUCATION ACT 1998

S.17

1 Where

- (a) the Minister is satisfied that the functions of a board are not being effectively discharged; or
- (b) a board wilfully neglects to comply with any order, direction or regulation of the Minister given or made under this Act; or
- (c) a board fails to comply with any judgment or order of any court of competent jurisdiction, the Minister may, by notice in writing, require the patron to dissolve the board for reasons stated in such notice and the patron shall dissolve the board accordingly as soon as may be after the date of such notice.

2 Before the Minister serves a notice as provided for in subsection (1), he or she shall inform the board and the patron of his or her intention to do so and shall consider any representations made to him or her by or on behalf of the board or the patron within one month of informing the board and the patron.

3 Whenever the patron dissolves a board under this section, subsections (5) and (7) of section 16 shall apply.

REPORT ON THE OPERATION OF THE BOARD – SECTION 19 EDUCATION ACT 1998

S.19

- 1 Where the Minister or the patron is of the opinion that the functions of a board are not being effectively discharged, the Minister or the patron, as the case may be, shall inform the board of that opinion and the reasons therefor.
- 2 Having considered any representations by the board, the Minister or the patron, as the case may be, may authorise any person or persons as the Minister or the patron may deem appropriate to report to the Minister or the patron or both the Minister and the patron on any matter arising from or relating to the operation of that board.
- 3 Any person appointed to prepare a report under this section shall be entitled at all reasonable times to enter any premises occupied by the school concerned and shall be afforded every facility and cooperation by the board, the teachers and other staff of the school, including access to all records, to perform his or her functions.
- 4 A principal or board shall supply the patron and the Minister with such information regarding the performance of the board's functions as the patron or the Minister, as the case may be, may from time to time require.
- 5 Where either the Minister or a patron proposes to exercise functions under this section then:
 - (a) the Minister shall inform the patron; or
 - (b) the patron shall inform the Minister, as appropriate, of the proposed course of action.

REPORT AND INFORMATION – SECTION 20 EDUCATION ACT 1998

S.20

A board shall establish procedures for informing the parents of students in the school of matters relating to the operation and performance of the school and such procedures may include the publication and circulation to parents, teachers and other staff and a student council where one has been established of a report on the operation and performance of the school in any school year, with particular reference to the achievement of objectives as set out in the school plan provided for under section 21.

THE SCHOOL PLAN – SECTION 21 EDUCATION ACT 1998

S.21

- 1 A board shall, as soon as may be after its appointment make arrangements for the preparation of a plan (in this section referred to as the 'school plan') and shall ensure that the plan is regularly reviewed and updated.
- 2 The school plan shall state the objectives of the school relating to equality of access to and participation in the school and the measures which the school proposes to take to achieve those objectives including equality of access to and participation in the school by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs.
- 3 The school plan shall be prepared in accordance with such directions, including directions relating to

consultation with the parents, the patron, staff and students of the school, as may be given from time to time by the Minister in relation to school plans.

- 4 A board shall make arrangements for the circulation of copies of the school plan to the patron, parents, teachers and other staff of the school.

USE OF NATIONAL SCHOOLS

The needs of the school must take priority over any external group or agency seeking to use the school premises.

Use of school buildings outside of school hours should be subject to the following conditions: [This list is not exhaustive]

- That the prior permission of the Board of Management be obtained
- That the consent of the trustees be obtained [cf. page 93].
- That there is a licence agreement between the Board and the group using the school premises. This licence should be drawn up by the patron's / trustee's solicitor on behalf of the school and the licence should be reviewed annually.
- The agreement with users of school facilities should be underwritten by a contract. This contract should be reviewed annually in conjunction with any licence.
- Any agreement should be in conformity with the lease for the building [if applicable].
- The content of any licence / contract is checked with the school's insurance company or broker to ensure that there is no conflict with policy.

-
- All external groups using the school have public liability cover and adequate insurance. Insurance certificates should be presented annually to the Board of Management, the patron and/or the trustees [Cf. Section 6].
 - Issues re interaction with the pupils must be prevented e.g. adults accessing the areas in use by them and encountering pupils en route to those areas – preferable to have separate entrances and exits/ facilities etc.
 - That an undertaking be obtained from the proposed user that every care will be taken to safeguard school property and that any damage to the school premises or equipment will be made good by those responsible for the activity.
 - That arrangements be made to leave the premises in a clean and tidy condition for the reception of pupils so that schoolwork will not be interrupted.
 - That the activities envisaged should terminate at a reasonable hour.
 - That the Board ensure that sufficient charge is made to cover any expense incurred in providing heating and lighting during the use of the school by outside groups.
 - That where children are involved the Board requires an assurance that Child Protection measures are in place and that those working with children are vetted.
 - Compliance with Revenue requirements i.e. users present an up to date certificate of tax compliance from Revenue.
 - What procedure has the Board of Management in place for the use of school property after hours? e.g. seeking BoM permission, reservations, termination at a reasonable hour, securing the premises after use...
 - Who coordinates the arrangements?
 - What charges are levied for use of school premises? Who collects these charges? How often are they reviewed?
 - Who checks that the user's insurance cover indemnifies the Board of Management?
 - Who checks with the School's insurance company or broker that the content of any contract / licence is not in conflict with the School's insurance cover.
 - What guidelines are given to providers of after school activities? e.g. Does any lease agreement or other arrangement with third party users remind those users of their obligations as outlined in Children First Guidelines? How will the Board of Management assure itself that third party users of the school premises have adequate health and safety and child protection measures in place?
 - Is the caretaker required to open/close the premises?
 - Who is responsible for ensuring that classrooms/school premises/grounds are fully ready for pupil use on every school day?
 - How does school patron/trustees ensure that groups can be asked to leave when required – refer to licence agreement.

Operational questions for consideration by the Board of Management

- Are the premises suitable for the proposed activity?

USE OF NATIONAL SCHOOLS AND INSURANCE

The following extract is taken from A Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in the School, Allianz, 2008, p. 15

"What about groups or persons using School property?"

The policy protects the Board (of Management) in respect of its (i.e. the Board's) legal liability to users of the School Property. Claims usually arise as a result of defects in the premises.

The group or other persons, however, can incur their own liabilities arising out of their activities and they should therefore have their own insurance to cover any such liabilities.

"What if the groups or persons using the School Property do not have or cannot get insurance?"

It is unlikely that they cannot obtain insurance. What they generally mean is that the cost of insurance cover appears very expensive or is outside their financial means.

Allianz recognises that Boards rely, to some extent, on the finances generated from outside groups or persons using the School Property. The policy, therefore, has been extended to include cover for these groups or persons but the cover provided is limited. For example:

- 1. cover applies only to activities which take place at the School Property. Any activities undertaken elsewhere therefore are not covered.*
- 2. Additionally the extension provided under the Custodian School Protection Policy does not provide cover in respect of*

accidental Bodily Injury loss or damage giving rise to a claim made by any member of the group or organisation against another member of the group or organisation

Consequently all outside groups or persons are advised to arrange their own separate insurance cover.

SHARING OF SCHOOL FACILITIES WITH THE COMMUNITY

See DES Circular 16/2005 on www.cpsma.ie

FINANCE

Education Act 1998 Section 18

- (1) Except in the case of a school established or maintained by a vocational education committee, a board shall keep all proper and usual accounts and records of all monies received by it or expenditure of such monies incurred by it and shall ensure that in each year all such accounts are properly audited or certified in accordance with best accounting practice.
- (2) Accounts kept in pursuance of this section shall be made available by the school concerned for inspection by the Minister and by parents of students in the school, in so far as those accounts relate to monies provided in accordance with section 12.

[cf. pages 79-81 & 166-167]

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND WORKS

- (a) No alteration, extension or replacement of the school building and/or grounds shall be undertaken by the board unless and until such have been approved in writing by the patron and trustees.
- (b) In addition to the approval required under (a) above, capital expenditure for which grant aid is to be sought must not be entered into until prior written sanction to do so has been received from the Department.
- (c) Boards must comply with current building and planning regulations and current public procurement requirements.
- (d) The patron may designate the Chairperson or a member of the Board to act on behalf of the school authority in dealing with the Department in regard to capital expenses. Such designation must be made in writing.

GRANT PAYMENTS

Details of funding to be issued to schools, incorporating any budgetary changes, are placed on the Department of Education and Skills website every year.

Funding provided for specific purposes, such as for the purchase of ICT equipment or to assist parents with the purchase of books, must be used only for the purpose for which it is granted.

Per capita grants are provided to cover general running costs, as well as caretaking and secretarial services. As per Circular 40/2009, these grants may be regarded as a common grant, which the Board of Management may allocate according to its own priorities.

BUDGETING

[See Clause 19 (e) at p.28 '*Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*']

1. Boards of Management should budget in such a way as to enable them to meet commitments which may be substantial but which arise only periodically.
2. Boards' expenditure should not exceed their annual income.
3. Overdrafts or other forms of debts or excesses of expenditure over income must be approved by the patron, in conjunction with Trustees where required, and should be avoided except for limited periods, and where the patron is satisfied that the overdraft or debt can be cleared by the Board in the short term.
4. At the commencement of its financial year the Board shall frame and adopt a budget for the year.
5. This budget should include provision for all relevant items of expenditure such as insurance, purchase of classroom requisites, maintenance costs etc.
6. The Board of Management may form a finance sub-committee for a specific purpose, to operate under the authority of the Board e.g. purchase of furniture, IT equipment etc.
7. A Parents' Association is entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the association. They shall consult with the Board about any fund-raising for the school or school projects. The approval of the Board is needed prior to these funds being raised. The expenditure of these funds is by the Board of Management in consultation with the Parents' Association. All monies raised or generated for an agreed project for the

school should, as soon as is practicable, be lodged to the school account. Any funds raised must be used for the purpose(s) for which the money was collected. If in exceptional circumstances, it becomes unnecessary for the Board to use all of the funds collected for the purpose specified, the Board will communicate this to the Parents' Association and where appropriate, the local community. In any event the funds must be used for the school. The Board in consultation with the Parents' Association committee will decide the change of purpose for which the funds are used.

[See Clause 19(e) (vii) of the '*Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*']

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND OTHERS

Part of the essential work of the Board of Management of a primary school is the maintenance of links with a number of people and groups. In some cases, it is sufficient for the Board to know of the existence and work of other groups. In other instances, the Board of Management will have close and important contact with those who are involved in various aspects of the work of education.

THE BISHOP (PATRON)

The Bishop, as leader of the Catholic community in the diocese and as patron of the school, has ultimate responsibility for the school. The Bishop delegates some of his responsibility to the Board of Management which is accountable to him. There will be contact between the Board and the bishop on a number of specified issues – for instance, the appointment of the Board, the appointment of chairpersons, the appointment, suspension or

dismissal of teachers, finance, school ethos. A number of the 'Maynooth Statutes' apply to primary schools, particularly in the areas of religious education and of insurance. The Bishop is entitled to request reports or documentation from the school and to receive reports of whole school evaluations.

The diocesan secretary for primary education will usually be the link between the school and the Bishop. However, the Board is always free to make direct contact with the Bishop. Minutes of meetings of the Board of Management are usually seen by the Bishop when he visits the parish for confirmation.

The Bishop should be invited to any significant event in the life of the school, e.g. opening a new school or extension, jubilee celebrations, retirement of long-serving teachers etc. The Bishop should be informed of any matter of interest or concern to the Board of Management that is likely to enter the public arena.

THE TRUSTEES

[See page 11 of *Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*]

The Trustees of Catholic primary schools are either nominated by the Bishop in the case of parochial schools and in the case of convent and monastery schools the Trustees are nominated by the Leadership Team of the religious congregation. In Catholic schools, as parties to the lease of the school, the Trustees have responsibility for the following:

1. To authorise all building works to be carried out at the school. The Board of Management may act as the client for building projects but cannot enter into a building contract without written authority from the Trustees.

2. The Trustees are required to undertake that the school is insured.
3. The Trustees are responsible for managing the costs relating to all major extensions and major repairs to the school.
4. The Trustees in consultation with the Board of Management allow the school premises to be used by other groups. The permission of the Minister for Education and Skills must be obtained for use of the school premises during the school day for purposes other than primary education. Groups who use the school premises must have their own insurance and enter into a licence agreement. [cf. page 88]
5. The trustees in consultation with the patron, staffs, Boards of Management and parents are responsible for the amalgamation of a school.
6. The trustees, patron and the Minister's permission must be sought before any alteration to the school premises or the school grounds takes place.

THE PARISH

The Catholic primary school is a parish school. The Board of Management should facilitate and promote close pastoral links between the local priests and the teachers and pupils of the school. The local priest should visit the school regularly. By arrangement with the principal teacher and the other teachers he should be given access to all classes. This should normally take place during the religious instruction period but may be facilitated outside of that time, if necessary.

The role of the priest visiting the primary school is essentially a pastoral role. His work will embrace the whole school community, students, teachers and parents. His role is

distinct from that of the Board of Management or that of the teacher.

In keeping with his pastoral role, he will be available to the staff by way of individual and group discussion. He will seek the cooperation of the staff members in the question of religious worship and apostolic activities.

The pastoral role of the priest in the school extends to the home of the pupils. He will make whatever informal contacts he can with the parents.

The Board of Management is encouraged to seek collaboration between the school and the parish, particularly in the preparation of the children for the Sacraments and for participation in the liturgical life of the parish community. Children should also be encouraged to become involved in appropriate ways in their parish, e.g. as altar servers, members of the junior choir etc.

The mutual help of the priest and teachers, with the support of the parents, is essential for the spiritual development of the pupils.

The Board of Management welcomes the local priest's pastoral support for the teachers themselves, particularly in times of stress or difficulty. It is helpful if the priest and the teachers can reflect and pray together about their shared vocation of caring for the young people in the school.

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

The Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) is an association established by the Irish Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious of Ireland. It was formally launched in 2010. Its aims are to:

1. foster coherence in Catholic Education at a national level;

2. provide a unified voice for Catholic Education in the public forum and with educational bodies and the Government;
3. support Catholic Educators in the core activities of learning and teaching in order to foster high quality lifelong learning and faith development for all learners;
4. support the roles of Governance, Trusteeship and Management.

The CSP has a Council of thirty-three members representative of all of the stakeholders in Catholic schools. This Council is charged with implementing a strategy that will achieve the aims of the CSP. The members of the Council are nominated by the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI), the Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS), the Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA) and the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS). Thus it is an umbrella body providing strategic thinking on the major issues facing Catholic schools.

In 2011 the CSP published a Position Paper on Catholic Schools in the Republic of Ireland. This is available at www.catholicschools.ie. It also carried out research on the future of Catholic primary schools and held four regional assemblies in May/June 2011. The results of this research and these consultations are available at www.catholicschools.ie.

[cf. pages 33-43 for information on CSP Ethos Document]

THE PUPILS

The school exists for the pupils. The educational progress and the welfare of the children should be the overriding consideration in all decisions arrived at by the Board of Management.

The Board of Management has a duty of care for the children attending the school. This duty is exercised by the Board's promotion of the welfare of the children and by a vigilance that is aware of difficulties and tries to eradicate or at least diminish them.

The Board of Management must ensure that the school premises are safe for pupils and teachers. The Board must also endeavour to provide a good learning environment by maintaining the school in good structural and decorative order and by providing, within its means, for appropriate teaching aids and class requisites.

The Board of Management must ensure that the school has a code of behaviour for pupils, that is drawn up in consultation with parents, known to parents and in accordance with NEWB Guidelines 2008. The code of behaviour should note that any form of bullying is unacceptable.

Members of the Board of Management should show their interest and concern for pupils by attending concerts, exhibitions, sports days etc. organised by the school, when possible.

THE STAFF

Staff are a most valuable and important asset to the school. If the staff are happy in their work, this will communicate itself to the pupils. Pupils learn best in a calm and positive atmosphere.

The Board of Management should meet the staff informally at least once a year.

The Board should ensure that the staff, under the leadership of the principal teacher, participates in a process of school planning. The Board and the parents make an input into the school plan at appropriate stages of the process. When the plan is completed, it is submitted to the Board of Management for approval. The school plan is reviewed at regular intervals.

The Board of Management must be aware of its obligations under the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

In the event of a difficulty arising between the Board and an individual staff member, agreed procedures should be followed in a spirit of mutual respect and concern. [cf. page 140]

Most misunderstandings between staff, or between a staff member and the principal teacher, can be dealt with informally. If a staff member chooses to lodge a formal complaint to the Board of Management, the grievance procedure is to be followed. [cf. page 140]

Staff members should be encouraged to avail of useful in-service courses and to pursue continuous professional development.

ANCILLARY STAFF

Some primary schools have full-time or shared caretakers and/or secretaries whose salaries are paid by the Department of Education & Skills. Under the more recent (1992 and 2000) schemes, Boards of Management are given a grant towards the provision of caretaker and clerical services. The amount of the grant is linked to the number of pupils in the school.

Arrangements for the use of the grants are left to the Board of Management. While the grants must be used for the purpose for which they are given, the actual allocation of monies as

between caretaker and clerical services, rates of pay, hours of work, job description etc. are matters for the Board to decide. Guidelines for the going hourly rate of pay for comparable work can be obtained from your local employment office.

Most primary schools employ cleaners. Cleaners are paid by the Board of Management out of school funds. Cleaners should have a clear job description and arrangement about hours worked, rates of pay etc.

The attention of the Board of Management is drawn to the legislation relating to part-time employees. It can be helpful if an individual member of the Board takes responsibility for informing the Board on various pieces of employment legislation. Explanatory leaflets and copies of relevant legislation are available on www.nera.ie.

Template contracts are available on www.cpsma.ie

Boards of Management should not agree to omit deductions of tax and/or PRSI from the wages of any employee.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS [source: DES]

The Rules for National Schools [1965] were set down by the Minister for Education and may be changed from time to time by circulars issued on behalf of the Minister for Education and Skills.

Circulars are issued by the Department of Education and Skills. All circulars should be noted under 'Correspondence' at the regular meetings of the Board of Management and made available to staff.

It is important that the chairperson and principal teacher would become familiar with the different sections within the Department of Education and Skills. It is useful to learn the names of the officials dealing with the different areas.

Telephone queries to the DES, other than for routine pieces of standard information, should always be followed by a letter from the chairperson or principal teacher as appropriate. Confirmation of any sanctions given by the Department on foot of a telephone query should always be followed up.

The Department of Education and Skills requires a number of returns e.g. salary, statistics, staffing notification etc to be made by each school at regular intervals on the OLCS [On-Line Claims System]. These would usually be prepared by the principal teacher and verified by the chairperson on behalf of the Board of Management.

The Department of Education and Skills determines the number of teachers to be appointed to individual schools. The 'schedule of staffing' is issued annually by the Department. Some additional teachers may be appointed to some schools on the basis of special circumstances.

While the Board of Management appoints the teachers subject to a number of conditions [see Template Letter of Offer available on www.cpsma.ie], the teachers' salaries are paid directly by the Department of Education & Skills. The Department also looks after PRSI, tax deductions, universal social charge [USC], pension-related deduction [PRD] and superannuation contributions for teachers.

One of the main contacts between the Board of Management and the Department of Education is likely to concern funding, particularly capital

funding if any building work is undertaken. The Department specifies procedures to be followed in a number of instances. It is essential that the Board adheres to these procedures.

THE TEACHING COUNCIL

[source: The Teaching Council]

The Teaching Council was established on a statutory basis in 2006, under the Teaching Council Act 2001, as the regulatory body for teaching in Ireland. It regulates the teaching profession, promotes professional standards in teaching and protects the public interest. Its role is similar to that of other professional regulatory bodies such as An Bord Altranais and the Medical Council.

The Teaching Council has 37 members, of whom 22 are registered teachers. The other 15 members represent the parents' associations, management bodies (e.g. CPSMA), third-level teacher educators, the teacher unions, the Department of Education and Skills, IBEC and ICTU. (A full list of members is available on www.teachingcouncil.ie.)

The Council is empowered by law to:

- set standards for entry to teaching
- maintain a register of teachers
- review and accredit teacher education programmes
- publish codes of professional conduct for teachers
- deal with complaints about a teacher's fitness to teach.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION (NCSE) [source: NCSE]

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was established in 2003. The NCSE has a number of key functions set out in Section 20 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 including:

- Allocating Resource Teacher and Special Needs Assistant (SNA) posts to schools;
- Conducting and carrying out research;
- Providing policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to special education;
- Disseminating information, including best practice, on special education to parents, schools and other interested persons;
- Consulting with voluntary bodies to ensure that their knowledge and expertise can inform the development of policy by the Council.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE [source NEPS]

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is a service of the Department of Education and Skills. NEPS psychologists work with both primary and post-primary schools and they are concerned with learning, behaviour, social and emotional development. Each psychologist is assigned to a group of schools.

NEPS psychologists specialise in working with the school community. They work in partnership with teachers, parents and children in identifying educational needs. They offer a range of services aimed at meeting these needs, for example, supporting individual students (through consultation and assessment), special projects and research.

NEPS mission is to support the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education, having particular regard for children with special educational needs.

TRADE UNIONS

CPSMA works with INTO, SIPTU and IMPACT in regard to employment issues for teachers, SNAs' and ancillary staff respectively.

IPPN

Irish Primary Principals Network [IPPN] is the professional support body for principals and deputy principals.

OTHER PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Boards of Management and staff of other primary schools in your area share the concerns of your Board. Informal contacts and meetings between the schools, particularly between schools in the same parish, can be helpful.

A Board of Management may not make any unilateral decision for its own school that may impinge on another school until it has consulted the diocesan authorities and, if necessary, the Boards of Management of the schools in question.

The Board of Management of a school does not have the authority to change the status of the school (i.e. single sex; co-educational; junior only; senior only; vertical etc.). Any such change requires the sanction of the Bishop and of the Department of Education and Skills [See *Uí Chróinín & Others v Minister for Education and Science and Bishop John Buckley 2006/503AB*]

Boards are advised to refer to www.cpsma.ie for most up to date guidance on arrangements pertaining to amalgamation or to contact the CPSMA office.

POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Board of Management of the primary school should establish links with the management of post-primary schools to which pupils transfer. The Board should also encourage the principal teacher of the Primary school to maintain liaison with the principals of the post-primary schools to discuss matters of mutual concern. The transfer of children from primary to post-primary schools should be undertaken with the greatest ease possible.

SECTION 4

Employment

Overview

This section deals with the following issues:

- Role of the Board of Management
- Functions of the Principal and Teacher
- The Principal Teacher
- Duties of the Principal Teacher – Circular 16/73
- Appointment Checklist
- General provisions for the Appointment of Principals and Teachers
- Offer of Appointment
- Notification to DES
- Vetting Procedures
- Principal and Teachers – Relevant Circulars
- Lunchtime Supervision
- Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers
- Positive Staff Working Relations
- Labour Relations Mediation and Conciliation Services
- General Provisions for Appointment of SNAs'
- Ancillary Services –General Information

ROLE OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT - SECTION 24 EDUCATION ACT 1998

Education Act 1998 Section 24:

24

- (1) Subject to this section, a board may appoint such and so many persons as teachers and other staff of a school as the board from time to time thinks necessary for the performance of its powers and functions under this Act.
- (2) The numbers and qualifications of teachers and other staff of a school, who are to be paid from monies provided by the Oireachtas, shall be subject to the approval of the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister for Finance.
- (3) A board shall appoint teachers and other staff, who are to be paid from monies provided by the Oireachtas, and may suspend or dismiss such teachers and staff, in accordance with procedures agreed from time to time between the Minister, the patron, recognised school management organisations and any recognised trade union and staff association representing teachers or other staff as appropriate.
- (4) Pending the agreement of procedures provided for in subsection (3), the procedures applied in the appointment, suspension and dismissal of teachers or other staff immediately before the commencement of this section shall, after such commencement, continue to be applied.

FUNCTIONS OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Section 22 Education Act 1998

Education Act s22

- (1) The principal of a recognised school and the teachers in a recognised school, under the direction of the principal, shall have responsibility, in accordance with this Act, for the instruction provided to students in the school and shall contribute, generally, to the education and personal development of students in that school.
- (2) Without prejudice to subsection (1), the principal and teachers shall:
 - (a) encourage and foster learning in students,
 - (b) regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents
 - (c) collectively promote cooperation between the school and the community which it serves, and,
 - (d) subject to the terms of any applicable collective agreement and their contract of employment, carry out those duties that:
 - (i) in the case of teachers, are assigned to them by or at the direction of the principal, and
 - (ii) in the case of the principal; are assigned to him or her by the board.

THE PRINCIPAL TEACHER

Section 23 Education Act 1998

s23

- (1) A board shall, in accordance with procedures agreed from time to time between the Minister, the patron, recognised school management organisations and any recognised trade union or staff association representing teachers, appoint to the school in a whole-time capacity a person to be principal of that school subject to such terms and conditions as may be determined from time to time by the Minister with the consent of the Minister for Finance.
- (2) In addition to the functions of a principal provided for in section 22, the principal shall:
 - (a) be responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, including guidance and direction of the teachers and other staff of the school, and be accountable to the.....board for that management;
 - (b) provide leadership to the teachers and other staff and the students of the school;
 - (c) be responsible for the creation, together with the board, parents of students and the teachers, of a school environment which is supportive of learning among the students and which promotes the professional development of the teachers;
 - (d) under the direction of the board and, in consultation with the teachers, the parents and, to the extent appropriate to their age and experience, the

students, set objectives for the school and monitor the achievement of those objectives; and

- (e) encourage the involvement of parents of students in the school in the education of those students and in the achievement of the objectives of the school.
- (3) For the purpose of carrying out his or her functions under this Act, a principal shall have all such powers as are necessary or expedient in that regard, and shall carry out his or her functions in accordance with such policies as may be determined from time to time by the board and regulations made in accordance with section 33.
- (4) The principal shall be entitled to be a member of any and every committee appointed by a board.
- (5) Where, at the commencement of this section, the employer of the Principal in a post-primary school is a person or body of persons other than the board of the school then subsection (1) shall apply as if the person who or the body which, at such commencement and from time to time thereafter, is such employer, is substituted for the board as therein referred to.
- (6) Wherever practicable, the principal shall, in exercising his or her functions under this section, consult with teachers and other staff of the school.

Boards of Management should note that the **Education (Amendment) Bill 2012**, at the time of going to print, is currently at select committee stage in Dáil Éireann. Boards are advised to check www.cpsma.ie for updates in relation to this Bill.

DUTIES OF THE PRINCIPAL TEACHER. CIRCULAR 16/73

[Reproduced here]

SECTION A

1. The manager of a national school is charged with the direct government of the school, the appointment of the teachers and, subject to the Minister's approval, their removal, and the conducting of the necessary correspondence (Rule 15 (1)).
2. Subject to the authority of the manager, the principal teacher is responsible (in addition to teaching duties which may vary according to the size of the school – and which may be determined by the Minister either generally or in relation to any particular school but from which the teacher can, in no case, be completely relieved) for the discipline of the school generally, the control of other members of the teaching staff, including the co-ordination and effective supervision of their work, the organisation of the school, the keeping of the records of attendance, the promotion of pupils, the timetable arrangements and their observance, the books used by the pupils, the arrangements in connection with the Free Books Scheme for necessitous children, and all other matters connected with the school arrangements in each division (Rule 123 (4)).
3. The authority of the principal teacher for the organisation and conduct of the school derives from the authority of the manager. Subject to the authority of the manager, the overall responsibility for the day-to-day activities of the school devolves on the principal teacher. The duties set out at Section B and C hereunder arise out of such responsibility.

SECTION B

The Principal Teacher and the Manager

1. The principal teacher should consult with the manager as the occasion demands and keep him/her informed on all matters concerning the school.
2. She/he should see that all lawful instructions issued by the manager are understood and carried out by the staff.
3. When a vacancy occurs on the staff, the principal teacher should make known to the manager the desirable qualifications of a new teacher, having regard to the needs of the pupils and the organisation of the school.

The General Discipline of the School

4. The principal teacher should organise supervision of the order and general behaviour of the pupils during school hours. In particular, she/he should organise and participate in the effective supervision of the pupils during breaks, lunch periods, assembly and dismissal. A table of names and times of supervision duties should be on display in the staff-room.

The principal teacher and the Staff

5. The principal teacher should ensure that each member of the staff carries out his/her duties in accordance with the requirements of the Rules for National Schools.
6. She/he should avail himself/herself of opportunities to visit classrooms to become familiar with the quality of the teachers' work. She/he should give encouragement, advice and teaching demonstrations or arrange for teaching demonstrations, particularly in the case of weak teachers and teachers on probation.

7. She/he should hold regular conferences with staff on matters concerning the general work of the school.
8. To enable his/her staff to keep abreast of modern educational theory and practice, she/he should, from time to time, arrange for suitable lectures, demonstrations and visits to selected schools, with the consent of the manager and on the advice of the inspector.
9. She/he should encourage the teachers of admission classes to take all reasonable steps to cooperate with the parents in easing the introduction of a child to school.

The Principal Teacher and Organisation

10. At the beginning of each school year, the principal teacher, in consultation with the staff, should plan a comprehensive scheme of work for the school, based on the requirements of an integrated curriculum.
11. After consultation with the staff, she/he should promote the pupils in accordance with the relevant sections of Rule 64 (amended) and the terms of Circular 10/67.
12. In consultation with the staff, she/he should decide on the organisation of the pupils for teaching purposes.
13. She/he should arrange a fair distribution of teaching duties among the staff, taking into account the needs of the pupils and the abilities, experience, personality and preferences of each teacher. She/he should utilise the services of staff teachers with special qualifications or aptitudes in an organising and advisory capacity. The areas of arts and crafts, music and physical culture may be of particular relevance in this connection.

14. She/he should arrange teaching duties for himself/herself which may vary according to the size of the school. Such teaching duties may be determined by the Minister either generally or in relation to any particular school.
15. In consultation with the staff, she/he should draw up a suitable timetable and ensure its general observance, bearing in mind the degree of flexibility and freedom required by the curriculum and modern teaching methods.
16. The principal teacher should ensure that each teacher prepares a long-term scheme of work and makes appropriate short-term preparation in accordance with the comprehensive scheme for the school, taking into account the ability and attainments of the pupils assigned to him/her.
17. At the end of the month she/he should arrange that each teacher indicates in a Record of Progress that portion of his/her annual scheme of work dealt with during the month. So as to avoid unnecessary repetition of work, it should remain available in the school for at least one school year after the year to which it relates.
18. In consultation with the staff, the principal teacher should arrange for regular assessment of the pupils' progress.
19. As far as is practicable, she/he should organise the normal staff so that additional help can be provided for pupils who may require it.
20. Where pupils are appropriately placed in a special class or remedial class, the principal teacher should ensure that the pupils' progress in these classes is

reviewed regularly, that there is liaison between the ordinary class teachers and the teacher of the special or remedial class and that pupils are reintegrated as soon as it is feasible to do so.

21. The principal teacher should ensure that additional opportunities and facilities are available to allow the more gifted pupils to make the fullest use of their natural abilities.
22. She/he should arrange adequate supervision and work for pupils whose teacher is absent.

The Principal Teacher and School Records

23. The principal teacher should carefully carry out all official instructions in connection with Roll Books, Daily Report Books, Registers, Teachers' Reports, School Record Cards, Annual School Reports on Pupils, the Free Books Scheme and other official records.

The Principal Teacher and Officials

24. The principal teacher should cooperate with government and local government officials in all matters relating to the schools, bearing in mind the rights of the pupils and their parents. In particular, she/he should carefully comply with the requirements of Rule 123 (6) (see Schedule II and Rule 125 (1) and (2)).

The Principal Teacher and Parents

25. The principal teacher should seek to win the confidence, cooperation and good will of the parents of his/her pupils and should be prepared to discuss with them, individually or otherwise, any matter relevant to the education of their children. At the beginning of each school year the principal teacher should discuss with the

Manager and the members of the school staff the question of group meetings of the parents of the pupils.

The Principal Teacher and Senior Pupils

26. The principal teacher should arrange for advice and guidance to pupils in their final year and to their parents of the opportunities, educational and otherwise, available to the pupils in the post- primary field.

Miscellaneous

27. The principal teacher, in consultation with the staff and having obtained the manager's prior approval, should arrange for tours and visits to places of educational interest.
28. She/he should bring to the notice of the pupils the advantages, both national and personal, of the habit of saving.
29. She/he should see that an adequate stock of books and other requisites is made available for the use of the school and for sale to the pupils.

SECTION C

Duties which may be Delegated

1. The effective supervision of the pupils during breaks, lunch periods, assembly and dismissal.
2. The care and safe custody of school requisites, equipment and teaching-aids.
3. Cooperation with the manager in matters relating to school maintenance, heating and cleaning, care and general appearance of school and school grounds.
4. The organisation and supervision of special and/or remedial classes.

5. Supervision and work for pupils whose teachers are absent.
6. School records and official forms.
7. Arrangements for talks and demonstrations and for visits to selected schools.
8. Arrangements, in agreement with the manager, for effective liaison with parents.
9. Arrangements for educational tours and outings.
10. The promotion of saving.
11. The supervision of school and class libraries.
12. Responsibility for organising particular areas of the curriculum throughout the school.
13. Responsibility for a particular school activity, e.g. games, choir, orchestra, drama etc.
14. Arrangements for the supervision of pupils during religious exercises.

SECTION D

Vice-Principal Teacher

1. The vice-principal teacher is required to assist the principal teacher in the day-to-day organisation and supervision of the school. In addition to his/her teaching duties, the vice-principal teacher should be assigned specific duties by the Manager. Before assigning such duties to the Deputy principal teacher, the manager should discuss the matter with the principal teacher.

Assistant Teachers with posts of special responsibility

2. The manager should arrange, in consultation with the principal teacher, to assign specific duties to each teacher holding a post of special responsibility.

SECTION E

1. The list of duties at Section B and C are not exhaustive and may be amended by the Department of Education from time to time as circumstances warrant.
2. Responsibilities and duties of the principal teacher and other staff vary according to the type and size of the school. Where warranted, the Manager, in consultation with the principal teacher, may make whatever amendments to the lists of duties at Sections B and C as may be necessary to suit the particular needs of the school. [End of Extract]

APPOINTMENTS CHECKLIST

Boards of Management are advised to note some changes which may arise from the passing of the Education [Amendment] Bill 2012. Check www.cpsma.ie for updates.

Administration in Preparation for Interviews	√
Boards of Management should check www.cpsma.ie for updates on procedures before proceeding to advertise any vacancy. Compliance with relevant redeployment arrangements is essential. Boards shall follow the procedures set out in Appendices D [Teachers] and E [Special Needs Assistants] of the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011.	
Outline of job specification and 'ideal candidate' to fill the post are specified by Board of Management. Boards should decide in advance the desired minimum number of applicants required before proceeding to re-advertise. Boards should check if there are any specific patron requirements.	
A selection board should be properly constituted. The makeup of the selection board depends on the category of post to be filled e.g. for the appointment of a Principal the selection board should comprise the Chairperson and at least two independent assessors nominated by the patron, whereas for a teacher the selection board is made up of the Principal, Chairperson and one independent assessor nominated by the patron. In the case of an SNA it should be the Principal, Chairperson and an independent assessor nominated by the patron.	
A copy of the advertisement should be available to each member of selection board and should be retained on the personnel file of the successful candidate.	
Applications Forms etc. of all candidates should be date stamped with the date of receipt of same and should be available for each member of the selection board. Boards who propose to accept applications by e-mail should follow the guidelines set out on p.42 [Teachers] and p.51/52 [SNAs] of the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011.	
The selection board must have gender balance - at least one man and one woman.	
The selection board must establish the criteria and scoring method to be used for assessment of the applications and short listing, having regard to the requirements of the particular post.	

Administration in Preparation for Interviews	√
The selection board must ensure that no member of it stands in any relationship to any candidate. 'Relationship' is any relationship, which could be deemed to be prejudicial. [See p.24 Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011.]	
The selection board must determine those applicants (who are duly qualified) to be called for interview. (If three or less have applied, all eligible applicants must be called). Where the minimum number [if specified by BoM] is not met, the position should be re-advertised.	
Questions and 'ideal' responses should be prepared by the selection board in advance of the interview.	
Agreed dates/venues for the interview/s is/are arranged.	
Administration after Short listing	√
Short listed candidates should be invited for interview, in writing, giving seven clear days' notice for times outside of school hours as appropriate. (Date of interview is normally within 3 clear weeks of the latest date for receipt of applications).	
Details of established criteria and a copy of the schedule for a Catholic school (as appropriate) should be sent to candidates called for interview.	
Additional materials/certification from candidates is requested, if required e.g. Teaching Council registration, Certificate to teach religion or its equivalent. [cf. Pages 65-69]	
Selection board members are supplied with timetable for interviews allowing sufficient time between candidates.	
Individual marking sheets for each member of the selection board and summary sheet for total marks are prepared. Assessors should be referred to as Assessor A, B and C. Agreed questions and desired answers should be on separate pages with no reference to interview candidates written on these sheets.	

Interviews	√
Has the Selection Board/Chairperson...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised the interview room appropriately for adults (good seating, heating, lighting, accessibility and ventilation)? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised a comfortable waiting area – i.e. rest room/s, newspaper, water etc.? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarified receptionist's role (the receptionist/secretary has no role in the interview process and must not comment, on any aspect of the process, to candidates)? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed on a questioning and marking system? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed questions to each selection board member and discussed desired responses? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefed the selection board members on recording of notes during the interview of each candidate? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally agreed candidate/s to be recommended to the Board of Management for appointment? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensured that a form stating that the interview process has been completed is signed and collected? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collected the individual marking sheets, which may subsequently be made available to the candidate on request? 	
Post Interview Administration	√
Has the Selection Board/Chairperson/Board of Management as appropriate...	
Checked the references of the highest ranked candidate?	
<p>Submitted a written report to the Board of Management, nominating the applicant(s) that the selection board deems appropriate for appointment, confirming that references of the highest ranked candidate have been checked?</p> <p>[See p.45 of the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011]</p>	
Retained a copy of the agreed ranking list for use in the event of the post not being filled by the highest ranked nominee. References of candidates should be checked prior to any offer of appointment being made?	

Post Interview Administration	√
Agreed to appoint the candidate so nominated, unless there is a good and sufficient reason not to do so and such reason was not known to the selection board; in which instance the matter is referred to the patron, whose decision shall be accepted by the BoM as final?	
In the case of two or more appointments, established an order of seniority based on the order of merit determined by the selection board?	
Sought the prior written approval of the patron for the appointment of the successful candidate before he/she is notified?	
Having received written approval of the patron, notified the successful candidate of his/her appointment and advised him/her that the appointment is subject to sanction of DES and/or registration with Teaching Council, vetting clearance/medical fitness.	
Notified the DES that the BoM has submitted the successful candidate's name to the patron and that the patron has given written approval for the appointment?	
Informed all unsuccessful candidates after the successful candidate has accepted the post in writing?	
Ensured that the successful candidate and chairperson have completed the relevant form and forwarded same to the DES?	
Entered into the appropriate contractual agreement with the teacher/SNA/Other staff member?	
Retained a list of suitable candidates to fill posts becoming vacant in the period of 4 months after interview in case of teachers (if so stated in relevant advertisements) or for one year in case of SNAs?	
Arranged for the retention of a record of criteria for short listing and notes/marks from interviews for a period of 18 months	

Checklist of Documents to be kept on File	√
Advertisement	
Established criteria for post	
Short listing criteria	
Interview questions	
Marking sheets for each candidate and aggregate marking sheet	
Reports and notes of selection board	
Decision of the selection board	
Written report to the Board of Management together with rank order of those deemed suitable for appointment	
Copy of letter to patron seeking written approval for the appointment	
Letter of approval from the patron for the appointment	
Copy of letter notifying the DES that the process is completed	
Letter of offer and acceptance from the successful candidate	
Appointment form - PTAF (copy of original) /other agreement form as appropriate.	
Sanction from Department of Education & Skills where appropriate	
List of suitable candidates in order of merit as appropriate should further vacancies occur, if so stated in relevant advertisement	
Appropriate letter of offer or contract of employment.	

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

***Refer to Appendix D of Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011, available on www.cpsma.ie**

Preliminary Steps

Refer to Appendix D, pages 38/39*

Advertisements

Appendix D, page 39 - 42*

Electronic Applications

Appendix D, page 42*

Selection Board

Appendix D, page 42 – 43*

Short Listing of Applications

Appendix D, page 43-44*

Interviews

Appendix D, page 44-46*

Order of Seniority

Appendix D, page 45*

Appointment as a Principal Teacher or as Teacher in convent and monastery schools

Appendix D, page 47*

Notification of Applicants

Appendix D, page 46*

OFFER OF APPOINTMENT

Prior approval of the patron must be obtained before an offer of appointment is made. Boards can log on to www.cpsma.ie - 'Appointments Section' for further guidance. Letters of Offer can be adapted for individual school use. Sample letters are available for permanent, fixed-term, and specified purpose appointments.

NOTIFICATION TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & SKILLS

Primary Teacher Appointment Form [PTAF]

See www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section

Panel Update Form

See www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section

On-Line Claims System

See Clause 30, page 30 of *Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* available on www.cpsma.ie

Change of Staff Form

See Clause 22, page 29 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*, available on www.cpsma.ie

Statutory Declaration

Available at www.cpsma.ie – 'Vetting Section'.

Form of Undertaking

Available at www.cpsma.ie – 'Vetting Section'.

Teacher Contracts

Refer to www.cpsma.ie for template contracts

Principal/Teacher [Permanent] contract

This contract does not exist currently and is subject to agreement with education partners as part of the Croke Park Agreement. [Pending agreement, the successful applicant(s) should be issued with a detailed 'letter of offer'].

Fixed-Term Contracts

See www.cpsma.ie, 'Appointments Section' for template document and general information.

Specified Purpose Contracts

See www.cpsma.ie, 'Appointments Section' for template document and general information.

Contract of Indefinite Duration

DES Guidance – See DES Circular 82/2007, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars.

CID Adjudication Process

See DES Circular 47/2006, available at www.cpsma.ie

Advice from CPSMA office

VETTING PROCEDURES: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please note that DES Circular 63/2010 is available on www.cpsma.ie – Circulars section.

Q.1. What is Garda vetting?

- A. Vetting is conducted by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU). Garda vetting does not provide clearance for persons to work with children. The function of the GCVU is to provide a statement which gives details of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed in relation to the applicant for vetting to a registered organisation (see Q.3 for the explanation of what constitutes a registered organisation).

Q.2. Where can I get details of the procedures/requirements for Garda vetting?

- A. DES Circular 63/2010.

Q.3. What is a registered organisation?

- A. The GCVU does not engage directly with individual applicants or schools. This means that neither schools nor individual applicants can apply to the GCVU for vetting. The registered organisation forwards the application for vetting to the GCVU. The GCVU issues the outcome of vetting to an authorised person within a registered organisation who in turn furnishes an original/certified copy of it to the school via the school contact person. In the case of teachers the vetting process is conducted through the Teaching Council which is the registered organisation. In the case of non-teaching staff the diocesan education office/diocesan child protection office/diocesan regional office is the registered organisation. The diocesan education office will have the details of what applies in its diocese.

Q.4. Who is the school contact person?

- A. This is the person designated by the Board of Management (BoM) to liaise with the authorised signatory. The school contact person will usually be the chairperson of the BoM or the principal. The BoM should also designate a person to deputise for the school contact person during his/her absence.

Q.5. Why is it important to designate a school contact person?

- A. Confidentiality is absolutely essential in the processing of vetting applications and outcomes. No member of staff other than the school contact person should have sight of vetting applications or outcomes. In addition it is vital to ensure that data protection legislation is complied with and that the appropriate security systems are in place to protect the security, confidentiality and integrity of all personal data of applicants. Copies of Garda vetting application forms must be securely filed at all times by the school contact person in a secure filing system to be accessed only by the school contact person. No member of staff in the school other than the school contact person has authority to read, discuss or copy a Garda vetting application or outcome. In order to ensure that post containing vetting outcomes is not opened inadvertently by secretarial or other staff, designated envelopes can be used e.g. an envelope with a coded reference on it.

Q.6. Who should be vetted?

- A. Any person who has or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults should be vetted. In schools all persons appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions (including volunteers etc.) of any duration must be vetted prior to commencing employment or the appointment (in the case of a volunteer) as the case may be.

Q.7. Who can be vetted?

- A. Any person over 18 years of age on his/her written authorisation.
- B. Where a person is between 16 and 18 years on his/her written authorisation and the written authorisation of his/her parents/guardian.
- C. A person under the age of 16 cannot be vetted.

Q.8. What happens if a person refuses to be vetted?

- A. That person cannot be appointed or engaged in any capacity i.e. not as an employee or volunteer.

Q.9. Is Garda vetting sufficient on its own?

- A. No. Thorough recruitment procedures are an essential element of child protection which includes:-
- A. interviewing
 - B. confirming identity
 - C. seeking, following up & checking references/ referees including (where applicable) the current employer
 - D. ensuring that any unexplained gaps in employment records/curriculum vitae/application form are satisfactorily accounted for
 - E. complying with vetting requirements. Vetting is only one aspect of thorough recruitment procedures.

Q.10. Does Garda vetting provide clearance for persons to work with children?

- A. No. Garda vetting **does not** provide clearance for persons to work with children. It simply provides details to a

registered organisation of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed in regard to the Applicant (i.e. the person being vetted).

Q.11. How does the school go about the process of having a person vetted?

A. This depends on whether the person is a teacher or non-teacher.

- **Teacher:** The teacher liaises directly with the Teaching Council. The teacher furnishes the school contact person with the original “vetting letter” that the teacher receives from the Teaching Council and a copy of this is retained on the teacher’s personnel file. In addition the school contact person must obtain from the teacher a statutory declaration & undertaking (see Q.14 regarding what the school contact person must obtain in order to comply with vetting requirements).
- **Non-teacher staff, contract workers & volunteers:** The school contact person furnishes the applicant with the official Garda vetting application form which the school contact person obtains directly from the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate. The completed form must be signed and returned by the applicant to the school contact person who must check it and forward it to the authorised signatory in the registered organisation (e.g. the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate). The authorised signatory checks the application form and if it is properly completed signs it and forwards it to the GCVU. The GCVU issues the vetting outcome

directly to the authorised signatory who forwards the original or a certified copy of it to the school contact person.

Q.12. Does CPSMA provide Vetting Application Forms?

A. No. The school contact person must obtain official Garda vetting applications forms from the registered organisation i.e. the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate. Teachers liaise directly with the Teaching Council.

Q.13. Which teachers must be vetted & comply with vetting requirements?

- A.
- **All persons appointed to teaching positions (of any duration) must be vetted** and comply with vetting requirements prior to commencing employment, this includes full time, part-time, permanent, temporary, substitute and newly qualified teachers
 - Teachers transferring from one school to another
 - Although not changing employer, any teacher who is returning to work after a leave of absence of 2 or more years
 - Teachers appointed to principal positions even where the teacher is currently employed in the same school
 - Teachers from the redeployment panel

Q.14. What must the school contact person obtain from the teacher in order to comply with vetting requirements?

- A. 1. **The original letter of vetting:** that the teacher receives from the Teaching Council must be provided to the school contact person by the teacher. This letter is only valid if the vetting outcome has been obtained in the same or previous calendar year. If not, the teacher will have to apply to the Teaching Council for vetting and the original vetting outcome that the teacher receives must be furnished to the school contact person. A copy of the vetting outcome should be retained on the teacher's personnel file.
2. **Statutory declaration:** (a template is in appendix 2 of Circular 63/2010). The teacher must provide the school contact person with the statutory declaration. The statutory declaration is only valid if it is dated for the same or the previous calendar year. If not, the teacher will have to furnish an up to date statutory declaration. The statutory declaration is a document which is signed by a teacher in the presence of either a notary public/commissioner for oaths/peace commissioner/practising solicitor which declares that there is nothing from a child protection perspective that would affect the position of trust in which the person would be placed. It authorises the school to make enquiries as are deemed necessary and entitles the school to terminate employment if relevant information has been omitted.

3. **Undertaking:** This is specific to the school. In the case of a teacher (where a payroll appointment form is required) the payroll appointment form incorporates the undertaking. The school contact person must ensure that the teacher signs the undertaking on the payroll form (as well as any other sections which the teacher is required to sign) and a copy of what is furnished to the DES should be retained on the teacher's personnel file. In the case of teachers where a payroll appointment form is not required, the teacher must sign an undertaking (a template of same is in Appendix 2 of Circular 63/2010). A form of undertaking is regarded as valid for other appointments to the **same school** if signed within the same or previous calendar year. The undertaking must be retained on the teacher's personnel file.

Q.15. Do teachers who are existing employees of the school need to comply with vetting requirements?

- A. • Consultations are underway with the education stakeholders regarding the introduction of procedures for the vetting for teachers who are existing employees. Until these procedures are in place schools are not required to have existing teacher employees vetted.

However as stated above, all persons newly appointed to teaching positions (of any duration) must be vetted prior to commencing employment which includes teachers who are transferring from one school to

another. In addition a teacher currently working in the school who has been appointed to the principal's position, any teacher who is returning to work after a leave of absence of 2 or more years and teachers from the redeployment panel are required to comply with vetting requirements.

A teacher who is being re-employed by the same school does not have to comply with vetting requirements provided there is no gap (other than school holidays) immediately prior to re-employment **and** the teacher has been previously vetted & complied with the vetting requirements for the initial employment with the school.

Q.16. What is the process in relation to non-teaching staff?

- A. All persons appointed to non-teaching positions of any duration must be vetted prior to commencing employment. This includes SNAs, secretaries, caretakers, cleaners, gardeners/maintenance staff, bus escorts etc. The requirement to comply with vetting requirements applies to all types of appointment i.e. full time, part time, temporary, substitute etc. Persons changing employment e.g. moving between schools etc. must also undergo vetting prior to commencing employment in the school. In addition any employee returning to work after an absence of 2 or more years must comply with vetting requirements.

Q.17. How does the school go about the process of having non-teaching/ancillary staff vetted?

- A. The school contact person furnishes the applicant with the official Garda vetting application form. These forms can be obtained by the school contact person from the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate. The completed form must be signed and returned by the applicant to the school contact person. The school contact person must check the application form and forward it to the authorised signatory in the registered organisation (i.e. the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate). The authorised signatory checks the application form and if properly completed signs it and forwards it to the GCVU. The GCVU issues the vetting outcome directly to the authorised signatory who forwards the original or a certified copy of same to the school contact person.

Q.18. What must the school contact person obtain from prospective non-teaching/ancillary staff in order to comply with vetting requirements?

- A. 1. **The original/certified copy of the vetting outcome** from the diocesan/regional authorised signatory as appropriate.

Where the person has previously been vetted through the same diocesan/regional office (as appropriate) in the same or previous calendar year the school contact person obtains a certified copy of same from the diocesan/regional authorised signatory. This vetting

outcome is only valid if the vetting outcome has been obtained in the same or previous calendar year.

If the vetting outcome is not for the same or previous calendar year or from the same diocesan/regional office, the school contact person must furnish the applicant with a vetting application form which the applicant must complete, sign and return to the school contact person who must check it and forward it to the authorised signatory. The authorised signatory checks the form and if properly completed signs it and forwards it to the GCVU. The outcome that the authorised signatory receives from the GCVU must be furnished to the school contact person and a copy of the outcome must be retained on the person's personnel file.

2. **Statutory declaration:** (a template is in appendix 2 of Circular 63/2010) must be furnished by the proposed employee to the school contact person. The statutory declaration is only valid if it is dated for the same or the previous calendar year. If not, the proposed employee will have to furnish an up to date statutory declaration. The statutory declaration is a document which is signed by the proposed employee in the presence of either a notary public/commissioner for oaths/peace commissioner/practising solicitor which declares that there is nothing from a child protection perspective that would affect the position of trust in which the person would be

placed, authorises the school to make enquiries as are deemed necessary and entitles the school to terminate employment if relevant information has been omitted.

3. **Undertaking:** This is specific to the school. In the case of an SNA the payroll appointment form incorporates the undertaking. The school contact person must ensure that the SNA signs the undertaking on the payroll form (as well as any other sections which the SNA is required to sign) and a copy of what is furnished to the DES should be retained on the SNA's personnel file. In the case of all other proposed employees, the proposed employee must sign an undertaking (a template of same is in Appendix 2 of Circular 63/2010). This undertaking must be retained on the proposed employee's personnel file.

Q.19. What happens if I cannot arrange for the vetting of the person before s/he commences employment?

- A. Every effort must be made to complete the vetting process in advance of the appointment being made. However, if in certain circumstances this is not possible (for reasons outside the control of the school authority) then the prospective employee must confirm acceptance in writing that his/her appointment is subject to the satisfactory outcome of the vetting process. In such cases, the prospective employee must be informed in the letter of appointment or separately in writing that his/her appointment is subject to the satisfactory outcome of the vetting

process. The prospective employee must confirm in writing his/her acceptance of this condition prior to commencing employment. Where possible, the school must minimise the occasions when such a person has unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. If, on receipt of the outcome of the vetting application and having followed appropriate due process, the BoM considers that the person is not suitable for appointment, then the appointment must be terminated. In the case of teaching staff parts A & B of Section 6 of the Primary Teacher Appointment Form must be fully completed.

Q.20. Do ancillary/non-teaching staff who are existing employees of the school need to comply with vetting requirements?

- A. This will be addressed once the procedures for vetting teachers who are existing employees are in place. As stated above, consultations are underway with the education stakeholders regarding the introduction of procedures for the vetting of teachers who are existing employees. Until procedures are in place, schools are not required to have existing ancillary/non-teaching staff vetted.

However as stated above all persons newly appointed to ancillary/non-teaching positions (of any duration) must be vetted prior to commencing employment. In addition (although not changing employment) any member of staff returning to work after a leave of absence of 2 or more years are required to comply with vetting requirements.

Q.21. Should every candidate who applies for a job be vetted?

- A. No. In an employment context vetting should not be sought prior to a decision being taken to make an offer of employment and should only be sought in respect of a person to whom it is proposed to make an offer of employment. The position should be offered subject to satisfactory compliance with Garda vetting requirements. If the candidate does not have a valid vetting outcome (as set out above) the school must ensure that the application for vetting is submitted immediately following the conclusion of the selection process.

Q.22. Can I ask existing volunteers who are currently assisting the school to be vetted?

- A. Yes. All volunteers (both existing and prospective) who has or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults should be vetted

Q.23. Who else in the school should be vetted?

- A. Any person who has or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults e.g. volunteers, contract workers, extracurricular teachers, sports coaches etc.

Q.24. How does the school go about the process of vetting non-employees e.g. volunteers, contract workers, external tutors, extracurricular teachers, sports coaches/trainers, drama, dance & music teachers, other persons engaged by the school to assist in and support school activities etc?

- A.
- The original/certified copy of the vetting outcome from the diocesan/regional authorised signatory must be obtained. To do this the school contact person must furnish the applicant with a vetting application form which the applicant must complete, sign and return to the school contact person who must check it and forward it to the authorised signatory. The authorised signatory checks the application form and if properly completed signs it and forwards it to the GCVU. The outcome that the authorised signatory receives from the GCVU is furnished to the school contact person and a copy of the outcome must be retained.
 - A school should also check references and the past work experience of such persons.
 - Circular 63/2010 provides that the school can rely on the vetting conducted by the person's relevant sporting/voluntary organisation if the vetting has been conducted in the last five years. The school must seek confirmation from the sporting or voluntary organisation that
 - the person has been vetted by the organisation,
 - that it is satisfied that the vetting outcome does not preclude the

person concerned from working with children or vulnerable adults,

- the school authority must view and record that it has viewed this letter,
- It must also separately obtain proof of identity of the individual concerned,
- If the school contact person has any queries s/he must contact the headquarters of the relevant sporting or voluntary organisation.

Q.25. Do student teachers have to be vetted?

- A.
- If the student teacher has or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults s/he must be vetted. Where vetting is arranged for student teachers through the relevant College, the student teacher must furnish the school contact person with the original vetting letter that s/he receives from the training college and a copy of same is retained in the school. In the absence of this the vetting is conducted through the relevant diocesan/regional office as appropriate.

Q.26. If there is a disclosure does that mean that the person cannot work in the school?

- A.
- It will be a matter for the BoM to consider all of the circumstances of the case, give due weight to all relevant factors and afford fair procedures to the individual concerned before making a decision. The fact that a person has a conviction does not automatically render him/her unsuitable for work with or access to children or vulnerable adults. The primary criterion in assessing the significance of the disclosure is its

relevance to child protection. An objective and balanced approach is critical in this regard. A person's suitability should be looked at as a whole in the light of the information available including the relevance of the nature of the offence in the context of child protection. The failure of an applicant to make a disclosure in the vetting application form may also be of relevance. The Teaching Council, in the context of registration, has guidelines for assessing vetting disclosures. See www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Q.27. What happens if the vetting outcome contains a disclosure?

- A. Where there is a disclosure of a conviction, non-conviction or a pending prosecution the school contact person informs the applicant in person and in private of the nature of the disclosure and seeks a response. This verification process should be proceeded with in advance of any decision being made which may affect the applicant. If the applicant disputes the content of the information there is a dispute mechanism in place. The diocesan/regional authorised signatory will resubmit the original Garda vetting application form to the GCVU for a re-check with a covering report outlining the basis of the dispute as indicated by the applicant. In any case where there has been an error in completing the original Garda vetting application form the applicant should complete a new Garda application vetting form and both forms should be submitted with the request for a re-check. If, following the result of the further check the applicant still disputes the disclosure,

arrangements will be made for further validation procedures to be undertaken in order to resolve the matters at issue in the dispute.

Q.28. What happens if the content of the disclosure is confirmed by the applicant?

- A. If the content of the disclosure is confirmed by the applicant the BoM must decide whether the disclosure renders the applicant unsuitable for the position. If the Board decides to employ/retain/avail of the services of the applicant, the applicant will be informed that the original Garda vetting application outcome will be retained in the applicant's personnel file/the school's file on the applicant in a signed and sealed envelope in a secure location. If the Board decides not to employ/retain/avail of the services of the applicant, the Garda vetting application outcome will be securely destroyed.

Q.29. Can the school contact person deal with queries in relation to a vetting application by applicant over the phone?

- A. No. Any discussions with an applicant regarding a vetting outcome must be in person. The vetting application must be completed in full by the applicant and signed by him/her.

PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS - RELEVANT CIRCULARS

APPOINTMENTS & PROBATION

Teacher Registration and Qualifications

DES Circular 31/2011, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars-Staffing Section.

Eligibility Criteria for Appointment as a Principal Teacher

DES Circular 02/02 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Principal Section.

Seniority of Primary Teachers

DES Circular 02/2004, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Staffing Section.

Release Time for Principal Teachers

DES Circular 25/2002, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Principal Section.

Probationary Requirements for Registration Purposes

DES Circular 47/2011, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - NQT Section.

Notification Requirements on Retirement

DES Circular 45/2011, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Retirement Section.

FILLING POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS:

Procedures for Filling Posts of Responsibility

DES Circular 07/2003, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Post of Responsibility Section.

Amendment to Assessment Criterion

DES Circular 28/2011, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Post of Responsibility Section.

Moratorium on Filling Posts of Responsibility
DES Circular 22/2009, available at www.cpsma.ie –Circulars - Post of Responsibility Section DES

Clarification Note on Circular 22/2009

available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Post of Responsibility Section.

Limited Alleviation Measures

Circular 53/2011 – See www.cpsma.ie for updates.

POSITIVE STAFF WORKING RELATIONS:

See page 124

Procedures to address Staff Relations Difficulties

For up to date information - see – www.cpsma.ie or contact CPSMA office.

Procedures to address Bullying/Harassment

For up to date information - see – www.cpsma.ie or contact CPSMA office.

Grievance Procedure

For up to date information - see – www.cpsma.ie or contact CPSMA office.

SICK LEAVE

Sick Leave Scheme for Teachers

DES Circular 60/2010, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars- Absences Section.

Occupational Health Scheme for Teachers

DES Circular 65/2008, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Absences Section.

OHS Operating Procedures [Revised 2011]

available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Absences Section.

*OHS Medical Fitness to Teach Guide
[Revised 2011]*

available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Absences Section.

Ill Health Retirement Information [Revised 2011]

available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Absences Section.

Employee Assistance Service

information available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Absences Section.

Assault of Staff Members

DES Circular 40/1997, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars- Assaults on Staff Section.

FAMILY LEAVE

Teacher Absences

DES Circular 32/2007 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Absences Section.

*Maternity Protection Entitlements
For Teachers*

DES Circular 11/2011 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Absences Section.

Adoptive Leave Entitlements

DES Information Booklet, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Absences Section.

Parental Leave: Main Provisions

DES Circular 01/1999, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Leave Section.

Parental Leave - Amendment 1 – DES Circular 23/2003, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Leave Section.

Parental Leave - Amendment 2 – DES Circular 01/2004, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Leave Section.

Career Break Scheme for Teachers

DES Circular 10/2011, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Staffing Section.

Job Sharing Scheme for Teachers

DES Circular 11/2003, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Staffing Section.

Carer's Leave for Teachers

DES Circular 05/2003, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Staffing Section.

Teacher Exchange Scheme

DES Circular 12/2003 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Staffing Section.

Unpaid Leave for Teachers

DES Circular 35/2010, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Staffing Section.

Extra Personal Vacation

DES Circulars 37/97, 32/2007 & 0035/2009 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Staffing Section

Croke Park Agreement – Additional Hours

DES Circular 08/2011, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Croke Park Section.

LUNCHTIME SUPERVISION

1. DES Guidance

DES Circular 18/2003, 29/2003 & 19/2012 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Supervision Section.

2. Contract for Supervision Duties

DES Circular 29/2003, available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Supervision Section.

3. CPSMA Guidance for Payment of

Supervisors: available at www.cpsma.ie – Guidance Notes

REVISED PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL OF TEACHERS

Section 24(3) Education Act 1998:

(3)A board shall appoint teachers and other staff, who are to be paid from monies provided by the Oireachtas, and may suspend or dismiss such teachers and staff, in accordance with procedures agreed from time to time between the Minister, the patron, recognised school management organisations and any recognised trade union and staff association representing teachers or other staff as appropriate.

1. Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers

DES Circular 60/2009 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Teacher Section.

2. Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Principal Teachers

DES Circular 60/2009 available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars - Principal Section.

3. Addendum to DES Circular 60/2009

Letter of Clarification of Timeframes: available at www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – Principal Section.

POSITIVE STAFF WORKING RELATIONS PROCEDURES

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

Introduction: Working Together

A key asset to any teacher is the support and security of working in a school where there are positive staff working relations. It is even more important when teachers are working in a changing environment and when society continues to make increased demands on the education sector. The primary sector has experienced a great many changes in recent times, which include the changing nature of society's expectations of education, increased parental involvement, the impact of social change in the classroom, and changes in the promotion and management structures within schools. In that context, it has become increasingly important for teachers to support each other and to create a school climate that fosters positive working relations. Equally, each teacher must be prepared to operate as part of a team and within the authority structures of the school.

The principal Management Bodies of primary schools and the INTO are of the view that it is incumbent on the staff and management of each school to promote a culture of positive working relations at all times. Where such a culture prevails, instances of adult bullying or harassment or staff conflict rarely occur.

The principal Management Bodies and the INTO recommend that staffs and boards of management should discuss this document vis-a-vis their own working relations and adopt all or relevant aspects thereof, in accordance with the needs of the staff and management through school policies and procedures or otherwise.

Please note that, in this regard, schools that work in a multi-disciplinary context, for example, special schools, may wish to adapt the procedures in order to cater for the range of personnel in the school.

The principal management bodies involved in the preparation of this document are:

- Catholic Primary School Managers' Association;
- Church of Ireland Board of Education;
- National Association of Boards of Management of Special Schools; and
- Educate Together.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this document are:

- to raise awareness among school staffs about the importance of fostering positive working relations with one's colleagues;
- to recommend guidelines for good practice);
- to set out various procedures to address staff relations difficulties, adult bullying or harassment.

The policy and procedures in this document will be monitored and reviewed from time to time, to ensure satisfactory operation.

A: RECOMMENDED GOOD PRACTICE

Management and INTO have identified the following key practices as being very important in the promotion of positive working relations. The presence or absence of these practices within the school can determine the school climate and culture and the dynamics of working relations among staff.

(a) **Internal Communication:** Regular, transparent, open and direct communication should be encouraged. As part of that process, staff may wish to raise issues, as appropriate, with each other or with the principal teacher/Management. Each party should be open to hearing and addressing counter viewpoints and to responding in a constructive manner to any matters raised. There should be regular staff meetings, i.e. at least one per term, where staff are fully aware of the agenda in advance and given an opportunity to submit items for discussion. There should be clarity about the issues discussed, the decisions taken and the agreed follow-up action. At the following staff meeting, minutes should be adopted and a report given on follow-up action.

(b) **Processes of Decision Making:** A hallmark of positive staff working relations is the manner by which decisions are made within the school. Each staff should consider, discuss and, if appropriate, review its processes of decision making. In some instances, decisions will be relatively automatic, particularly if governed by clearly established rules and regulations, while in other cases, decisions may be made on the basis of existing custom and practice. Alternatively, and increasingly, staffs are called upon to make decisions on the basis of consultation and consensus within the school community. This is particularly the

case in drafting school policies, e.g. discipline, home/school links, RSE etc.

The processes of decision-making should give due regard to the role of the principal teacher and the Board of Management in accordance with DES Circular 16/73 and other relevant legislation. In order to foster collaborative decision-making, members of staff should be willing to make constructive contributions, to listen to and respect each other's viewpoints, to be prepared to be flexible, and to compromise if necessary and to uphold the majority decision. Those chairing staff meetings should encourage such open and constructive discussions.

(c) **Effective School Policies and Procedures:** All staff should be aware of and have access to copies of school policies and procedures covering the curricular and administrative areas. Administrative policies cover such areas as dealing with parental complaints (complaints procedure), dealing with parents (home/school links), disciplining pupils, bullying among pupils, supervision, dealing with child abuse etc. There should be school policies on a wide variety of administrative matters and these should be implemented fairly and consistently, and in an open and transparent manner. It is in the staff's interests also to ensure that such policies and procedures are approved and adopted by the school's Board of Management.

(d) **Mutual Respect:** Each member of staff performs a different role in the school and each is fully entitled to be treated with professional respect and with dignity. The principal teacher is both a staff member and a team leader with overall responsibility for the day to day activities in the school. Particular functions and responsibilities may be delegated to the other management

personnel in the school, e.g. Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and Special Duties Teachers. As well as being responsible for their individual classes, each teacher also has a clear responsibility for the implementation of school policies.

(e) **A Sense of Fairness:** Individual staff members should be aware of the importance of demonstrating a sense of fair play, tolerance and goodwill. Exercising sound judgement based on relevant information, common sense and reasonableness are also significant factors in promoting positive staff relations. For example, deciding to compromise on a matter, rather than holding steadfast can often be the wisest and most sensible thing to do.

(f) **Unacceptable Behaviour:** There are certain behaviours which are not acceptable among staff members and which create negative staff relations. Such behaviours include workplace bullying, sexual harassment, rudeness, aggressiveness, offensive language, threatening or intimidating behaviour, victimisation and harassment. Each member of staff should respect the integrity and dignity of her/his colleagues.

Furthermore, in relation to adult bullying and sexual harassment, management and INTO recommend that each board of management/school adopt a policy and procedure that would include a clear statement that any such behaviour is not acceptable within the school. A complaint of sexual harassment or bullying may result, following investigation, in disciplinary action. However, where a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying is not upheld, no action shall be taken against the

complainant, provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and the disciplinary procedure invoked. (See Section C2)

(g) **Conflict Resolution:** Conflict generally arises where two or more people disagree over issues of organisational substance and/or experience some antagonism towards each other. Principal Teachers/Management may spend significant amounts of time dealing with conflict situations, either as a third party in trying to resolve matters or as one of the parties to the conflict. In so far as the school as a workplace is concerned, it is important to recognise that (a) over a period of time conflict is inevitable; and (b) that it is critical to resolve conflict at the earliest opportunity and before it is allowed to fester. In the vast majority of cases, teachers deploy conflict resolution skills, informally, effectively and constructively, such as:

- listening;
- identifying the source of conflict;
- addressing the issue early and in a constructive manner;
- putting forward options for resolution which may include reaching compromises;
- acknowledging if errors have been made by another party or that misunderstandings may have occurred;
- accepting solutions whether as a compromise or otherwise;
- closing the matter;
- moving on.

It is recommended that each staff foster a culture of open communication and debate, where conflict can be aired and dealt with constructively, speedily and in a reasonable manner and if possible, without recourse to the procedures set out in Section C.

B: KEY PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING ALL OF THE PROCEDURES

It is intended that each of the procedures in Section C (1–3) will provide an overall framework to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity and preferably within the school structures. As staff relations issues and instances of bullying or discriminatory harassment vary significantly from school to school, Section C (1) and (2), in particular, place the emphasis on the general stages that should be followed in order to resolve matters.

However, it is important to note that the following key principles or procedural points are intrinsic to each procedure:

- 1. identify the difficulty**
- 2. observe due process**
- 3. keep records**
- 4. set realistic goals and parameters**
- 5. choose the appropriate procedure**

Identify the difficulty;

There are similarities in relation to the range of factors that arise in primary schools where there is internal conflict among staff members. The following list comprises issues which have been identified by staff as the main areas responsible for breakdowns in staff relations:

- bullying, intimidation, victimisation, verbal abuse, sexual harassment or other forms of discriminatory harassment;
- lack of consultation, dialogue and involvement in the processes of decision-making;
- unwillingness to engage in consensus decision-making;
- lack of decision-making;
- indecisiveness;
- unwillingness to cooperate with school policy or operate as team players;
- cliques among staff;
- on-going expression of disgruntlement by internal school candidates who were unsuccessful in the competition for the Principalship or other internal promotions. Other colleagues may also express disgruntlement and this may result in a lack of cooperation with newly promoted post-holders/principal;
- a new principal introducing sweeping changes without proper consultation or meaningfully engaging staff in the process of change over realistic time frames;
- members of staff not talking to each other or not engaging in constructive communication;
- personality factors;
- lack of appropriate involvement by the board of management;
- insecurity and uncertainty among staff in the absence of the support of effective school policies, for example, in dealing with problematic areas, such as complaints against teachers, disruptive pupils etc.;

- perceptions that certain members of staff are favoured by management;
- feelings of being systematically undermined;
- staff members afraid to speak openly.

It should be noted that the above list does not purport to be final or exhaustive as it would be impossible to list every possible cause of conflict.

Observe due process

The principles of due process, natural justice and fairness underpin the three procedures outlined in Section C, (1, 2 and 3). Accordingly, if issues are raised against a member(s) of staff, she/he is entitled to be fully appraised of the issues concerned and given an adequate opportunity to respond before any conclusions are drawn. In addition, parties should make clear to each other if they are following a particular procedure and, if so, identify the appropriate stage. Where documentation, records or submissions are being relied upon by Management or a third party, each party to the dispute or difficulty should have an opportunity to access and respond to such documentation (see paragraph below). As appropriate, a teacher may be entitled to be accompanied by a friend at meetings with the board of management or, in the event of a disciplinary hearing, may be entitled to INTO representation. Neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any hearings.

Keep Records

Records are useful, particularly in terms of identifying whether there is a pattern of difficulty or offending behaviour. However, the

principles of due process and fairness should apply to the keeping of records, especially in circumstances where the records are being relied upon by a third party or a board of management in making a judgement. The following guidelines in relation to keeping records should be borne in mind:

- records should be clear, honest and accurate accounts of all relevant matters, in chronological sequence, including details of offending behaviour, attempted resolutions, meetings, discussions etc.
- a member(s) of staff, who feels bullied, aggrieved, affected by staff conflict, sexually harassed or otherwise discriminated against in the course of her/his employment, should note/record the pattern of behaviour.
- records may form the basis of written submissions to the board of management or other appropriate third parties.
- in general, written records are confidential to the party keeping the record, except in circumstances where that party seeks to rely on such records or, for example, incorporate all or part of such records into a written submission to the board of management or other appropriate third party, e.g. a tribunal established under the Grievance Procedure. In these circumstances, and in accordance with due process, the party must be prepared to treat such records/submission in a transparent manner, in terms of furnishing copies of those records/submission to all of the relevant parties, as outlined in the various procedures.
- generally, where formal procedures involve appropriate third parties or the board of management, written submissions and/or responses may be obtained from all relevant parties and copied to all relevant parties.

Set Realistic Goals and Parameters

It is critically important to set goals and expectations within the context of realistic parameters. Unrealistic and unachievable expectations can have the contrary effect of entirely frustrating the process. In that context the following should be borne in mind:

- changing the dynamics of working relations in a school from negative/partly negative to positive is a process which may take a considerable length of time and which will require on-going effort, compromise, flexibility and constructive interaction by all those involved. Accordingly, it is reasonable to establish a framework for resolution of issues over an agreed and realistic time frame.
- the primary responsibility for promoting positive working relations in a school rests with each individual member of staff. Passivity among staff members may frustrate the promotion of positive working relations.
- since promoting positive working relations is a process which may involve awareness raising and possible behavioural changes, it may be appropriate for members of staff to consult other relevant literature on the dynamics of workplaces, bullying, conflict resolution, the functions of leadership and management etc., and also to attend relevant training courses.
- it is an intrinsic function of effective leadership that Management, including the principal teacher, should promote positive relations. In particular, where there are relations difficulties in a school, Management should support initiatives, including training and facilitation, to deal with matters. In addition, if there is

unacceptable behaviour perpetrated by one staff member against another, Management may be required to invoke disciplinary action against the teacher concerned, subject to the normal principles of due process. It is also the responsibility of Management to monitor the initiatives put in place to restore/promote positive working relations.

Choose the appropriate procedure

Having identified the difficulties, the individual member or members of staff concerned should decide on whether it is feasible and more appropriate to address matters informally between themselves or initiate one of the following procedures:

C1 Procedure to Address Staff Relations Difficulties.

C2 Procedure to Address Adult Bullying/Sexual Harassment or Harassment on Other Specified Discriminatory Ground, arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment.

C3 Grievance Procedure.

While there are significant parallels between each of the procedures, in that, for example, each provides for:

- directly addressing matters;
- informal and formal stages;
- an emphasis on constructive engagement;
- an emphasis on early resolution,

there are also some key difference, such as:

- **Procedure 1** places the emphasis on addressing staff relations difficulties in a consensus and voluntary type approach and it includes the provision of a mediation facility;
- **Procedure 2** is specific to the matter of allegations of bullying, sexual harassment or other specific discriminatory harassment, which may occur in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment;
- **Procedure 3** places the emphasis on processing specific grievances that usually relate to breaches of school rules, policies, procedures or practices. It provides that an independent tribunal may be established that is empowered to issue a decision that is final and binding on all parties.

In deciding to proceed with any one of the procedures, it is advisable that teachers and Management seek advice.

C1 PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS STAFF RELATIONS DIFFICULTIES

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

Stage 1: Informally Address Matters between the parties

It is open to an individual teacher/group of teachers/entire staff to raise the matter of internal working relations in the school, particularly where staff relations difficulties exist. For the purpose of this procedure, the teacher(s) who raise the matter shall be termed Party A. Party A should raise the matter with the teacher(s) who it is considered is the source of the difficulty or who is contributing to the difficulty and this may include the principal teacher, i.e. for the purpose of this procedure, Party B. The manner by which Party A decides to raise matters will, to a large extent, depend on the issues identified by the party, previous experience and the existing procedure in the school for raising matters. In general, the following steps should be taken:

- party A should identify the areas where staff relations difficulties exist or, if applicable, where relations can be improved;
- party A should raise matters at the earliest opportunity directly with party B;
- party B should make every effort to respond in a constructive manner to the issues raised by party A;
- the onus is now on both parties to engage constructively to sort out matters and it

would be expected that the parties would be prepared to reach solutions and, if appropriate, move their position in order to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity;

- both parties should agree realistic time frames which should not be later than 20 school days by which time a framework for resolution of issues should be agreed;
- the outcome of the discussion should be recorded by the parties in a mutually agreeable manner (cf. Section B);
- by agreement, the twenty school-day period may be extended and the parties should take specific note of the new time frames.

***Please note** that if resolution is not achieved, and the principal teacher is one of the parties at Stage 1, then, where a party wishes to continue, the procedure should, after completion of Stage 1, move directly to Stage 3 or Stage 4.*

Stage 2: Role of the Principal Teacher

Where it has not been possible to resolve matters informally and directly between the parties, and where the principal teacher is not a party to the conflict, the principal should be consulted by both parties as follows:

- the principal teacher should be briefed by each party on the discussions which have occurred at the informal stage;
- as part of effective leadership, the principal teacher has a role in promoting positive working relations and, accordingly, should hear the parties and seek to mediate and resolve the staff-relations difficulty;
- the principal should act in a fair and impartial manner and may exercise

judgement and make decisions that she/he considers necessary to resolve matters;

- the onus is on both parties, facilitated by the principal teacher, to engage constructively to resolve matters and it is expected that the parties would be prepared to reach solutions and, if appropriate, move their position in order to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity;
- where the principal teacher deems it prudent and appropriate, she/he may raise the matter at a staff meeting and seek to initiate a framework through full staff dialogue, to resolve matters. In these circumstances, it is recommended that, where possible, a neutral member of staff or a member of staff acceptable to both parties should be selected to chair the staff meeting;
- the outcome of the discussions should be recorded by the parties, including the principal teacher, in a mutually agreeable manner (cf. Section B);
- twenty school days are provided to resolve matters at Stage 2 and the parties should note the time frames, which should only be extended by agreement.

Please note that where resolution is not achieved at Stages 1 or 2, it is open to the parties to move to Stage 3 or to go directly to Stage 4.

Stage 3: External Intervention

Where resolution has not been achieved at either Stage 1 or Stage 2, the parties and/or the principal teacher may request the board of management to appoint a mediator, agreeable to the parties. Prior to entering a mediation process, each of the members of staff

concerned will be required to supply the following background information for the attention of the mediator only:

- a written account of the issues involved;
- a written account of the initiatives taken to date to resolve matters, detailing any progress made together with a general outline of the sequence of dates. Where the principal teacher has been involved at Stage 2, he/she should also supply an account;
- a list of the outstanding issues and the resolutions sought by the parties;
- a written and signed undertaking, to the effect, that he/she
 - will constructively participate in the mediation process;
 - will be flexible in order to achieve resolution;
 - will abide by and act on the recommendations of the mediator.

The mediator shall:

- review all of the documentation;
- arrange to meet with the parties;
- decide on whether it is possible to achieve a framework for resolution in light of the attitudes of the parties;
- where the mediator decides to proceed, she/he shall, following the mediation process, draft a conclusion.

The conclusion of the mediator shall solely state whether mediation has either achieved or failed to achieve a framework for resolution. The conclusion of the mediator shall be available to the parties and to the board of management.

In addition, if a framework for resolution is agreed between the parties then a copy of same may be appended to the conclusion.

As a rule, the mediator shall complete his/her work within twenty school days.

A joint INTO/MANAGEMENT panel of mediators will be established for the purpose of facilitating independent mediation.

Please note that any expenses involved at this stage will be shared by the parties, i.e. INTO and the relevant Management Body, provided that prior sanction for same has been obtained from those parties.

Stage 4: Formally Address Matters with the Board of Management

Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution at previous stages, the matter should be referred, by the parties, to the board of management for investigation. The referral should be in writing. In addition, the conclusion to the mediator may indicate that the matter should be referred to the board of management and, in this regard, the mediator's conclusion may itself constitute a referral. Once a board of management has received a written referral to investigate a staff relations difficulty, it should, generally, proceed as follows:

- the Board may enquire into the background of the difficulties, including obtaining details on the sequence of initiatives taken at previous stages;
- the Board or the chairperson of the Board may meet the teachers individually or collectively and may also request written submissions from the parties, having regard also to the principles of due process (cf. page 128);
- the Board may request the principal teacher to furnish a written submission;
- the Board may afford the parties an opportunity to present their case orally at a Board meeting, in each other's presence;
- following oral presentations, the board of management may designate the chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required or to work towards resolution;
- the board of management may convene a number of meetings in order to achieve resolution;
- the board of management shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution;
- the Board is entitled to reach conclusions and to request the parties to agree a framework for resolution in which the parties will fully and constructively participate;
- where the parties fail to voluntarily agree a framework for resolution, following a request by the board of management, the Board itself is entitled to decide on an appropriate framework for resolution and may, if considered necessary, direct the parties to participate in same;
- the board of management should complete its investigation within twenty school days of receipt of the written referral;
- the steps taken at Stage 4 should be recorded, reviewed and monitored, and the record should be available to the parties.

C2 PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS ADULT BULLYING/HARASSMENT

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

The procedures set out below may be initiated in relation to any of the following circumstances, which may occur in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment:

- adult bullying
- sexual harassment
- harassment on other specified discriminatory grounds, which could in the circumstances be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

INTO and management recommend that each board of management/school adopt a policy and procedure on bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment on specified discriminatory grounds, which would include a clear statement that any such behaviour is not acceptable within the school. In this regard, it should be noted that the procedures below provide that a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying may result, following an investigation, in disciplinary action. Where a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying is not upheld, no action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and the disciplinary procedure invoked.

The procedures outlined below are specifically designed to address adult bullying, sexual

harassment or harassment on other specified discriminatory grounds, in an industrial relations/domestic framework.

It is also open to any member who considers that she/he is being discriminated against, to contact her/his CEO District Representative or INTO Head Office with a view to pursuing or referring a complaint to the Director of Equality Investigations or Labour Court, as the case may be.

Adult Bullying

There is no uniform definition of workplace bullying available. The INTO policy document Relationships and the School Community/Bullying and Other Issues defines bullying as 'repeated aggressive behaviour of a verbal, physical or psychological nature'. The document also presents a range of other definitions in use by various unions and organisations and also describes the forms and effects of bullying and profiles both the typical victim and bully.

Adult Bullying can take many different forms which usually include:

- intimidation or harassment
- aggression
- verbal abuse
- humiliation
- undermining
- dominance or abuse of power
- different or unfavourable treatment
- exclusion or isolation

Key features of Adult Bullying are that the behaviour is generally:

- persistent and/or systematic
- unwanted
- subtle
- non-physical

However, for the purposes of the procedures outlined in this document, CPSMA and INTO have adopted the definition of bullying set out by the Health and Safety Authority which is:

Bullying in the workplace is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Bullying is where aggression or cruelty, viciousness, intimidation or a need to humiliate, dominate the relationships. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while to be condemned, should not be described as bullying. In the workplace environment there can be conflicts and interpersonal difficulties. Many of these are legitimate industrial relations difficulties that should be dealt with through the appropriate industrial relations channels. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and on-going should be regarded as bullying.

Accordingly, it is the view of INTO and CPSMA that the exercise of legitimate management function, in a reasonable and fair manner, does not constitute bullying.

Sexual Harassment or Other Harassment on Specified Discriminatory Grounds

The Employment Equality Act (1998) explicitly provides that sexual harassment and other harassment on legally defined discriminatory

grounds is unlawful and constitutes discrimination, contrary to the Employment Act 1998. The Act (1998) defines harassment as any act or conduct which is unwelcome and offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the employee concerned, on a discriminatory ground, including spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written material or pictures.

Employers may also be liable under the 1998 legislation, in respect of harassment occurring in the course of employment, whether or not it occurs with the employers' knowledge or approval. However, the legislation also provides that it shall be a defence for an employer to show that reasonably practicable steps were taken to prevent the harassment.

It is important to distinguish harassment, including sexual harassment, from normal social interaction at work involving mutually acceptable behaviour.

Sexual Harassment

It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably than another person on ground of sex in matters relating to employment, whether in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment. Sexual harassment creates an unpleasant and intimidating work environment, threatens job security and undermines equality in the workplace. It is a form of discrimination and every effort should be made to eliminate it.

The Employment Equality Act (1998) defines Sexual Harassment as any unwelcome act, request or conduct, which could reasonably be regarded as sexually or otherwise on the ground of gender, to be offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the employee in question, such as:

- any act of physical intimacy; or
- any request for sexual favours; or
- any other conduct, such as spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials.

Discrimination may also arise if a person is treated differently in the course of his/her employment by virtue of his/her acceptance or rejection of the Sexual Harassment.

In September 1994, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform published a Code of Practice on measures to protect the dignity of women and men at work. The Code of Practice was issued in accordance with the European Commission's Code of Practice, which defined Sexual Harassment as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work'.

Other Harassment on Specified Discriminatory Grounds

The Employment Equality Act (1998) states that other harassment, whether in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, may constitute discrimination, contrary to the legislation, in circumstances where:

- the harassment arises from an employee's marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community; and
- the harassment is unwelcome and could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the employee concerned.

Harassment may constitute any act or conduct, such as spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written works, pictures or other material. Discrimination may also arise if a person is treated differently in the course of his/her employment by virtue of his/her acceptance or rejection of the harassment.

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT/PROCEDURES

Preamble:

The procedures outlined below are designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment, or other harassment arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, in a fair and effective manner. In implementing the procedures, it is recommended that emphasis should be placed on assuring the party who considers that he/she is being bullied/harassed that his/her complaint will be acknowledged, that the matter will be investigated effectively and sensitively, and in accordance with due process.

Equally, where it is found that bullying or harassment has occurred, the emphasis, firstly, is to ensure that the offending behaviour immediately ceases and secondly, is to help the offending party acknowledge that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and that steps must be taken to address the matter constructively, thereby avoiding any recurrence.

It is important to ensure that resolution is achieved at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, it may be appropriate for the victim or the offender to attend counselling or obtain such other help as may be required.

Stage 1: Decide to Address the Matter

1. The party (party A) who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed, or harassed on other discriminatory grounds, should decide to address the matter. However, in light of the potential effects of bullying or harassment on an individual, including the loss of confidence, extreme upset, anxiety or fear, party A may initially decide to seek INTO or other assistance, including Employee Assistance Scheme or other counselling, in order to consider the most appropriate application of the procedures in the circumstances.
2. Party A should keep a record of the pattern of behaviour, or instances where he/she considers that bullying/harassment has occurred. The record should contain details such as dates, times, persons present, details of what was said or what occurred. (Further details on the keeping of records are outlined in Section b, page 128)

Stage 2: Informally Address the Problem

1. The party who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed, or harassed on other discriminatory grounds (party A), should request a meeting with the other party (B) in order to discuss matters. The following should apply:
 - where necessary, the meeting may be facilitated by a third party, generally a teaching colleague.
 - Party A should clearly outline his/her

difficulties and should clearly object to the bullying/harassment and request that it stop.

- it is important that party A bear in mind, that the other member of staff may not be aware that his/her behaviour is causing difficulty.
 - both parties should seek to resolve their differences and establish a pattern of interaction exclusive of any forms of bullying/harassment.
 - Party B may respond to party A at that meeting or, if requested, should be given an opportunity to consider his/her response, in which case the meeting may be adjourned. Party B should respond in a constructive manner.
2. The resolution, as appropriate, may include any of the following, e.g. a commitment to cease the particular behaviour, modify the behaviour, and plan to eliminate situations where the parties would be in conflict or monitoring. Alternatively, it may emerge, as a result of the discussions between the parties, that there may have been a degree of misunderstanding in relation to certain behaviours and the resolution may make provision for compromise or appropriate explanation or acknowledgement.
 3. If there is no satisfactory indication of resolution between the parties, party A should refer the complaint to Stage 3, i.e. formal procedures.

Stage 3: Principal Teacher or Chairperson of the Board of Management

1. Stage 3 provides a mechanism for the principal teacher to intervene and resolve the matter. However, if the principal teacher

is one of the parties, the chairperson of the board of management should then be involved, in an individual capacity, in order to achieve resolution. In circumstances where the chairperson may also be involved at Stage 2, another member of the Board may be designated to intervene.

2. Party A should advise party B that he/she is proceeding with Stage 3.
3. Party A should state his/her complaint in writing and request the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to investigate the matter.
4. The principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) should:
 - obtain background details including details of what occurred at the previous stage;
 - consider the pattern of behaviour and the timescale;
 - hear the parties and seek to resolve the matter;
 - act in a fair and impartial manner and deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem and the principles of due process;
 - exercise judgement and make decisions which he/she considers necessary to resolve matters;
5. The outcome of the discussions should be noted by the parties;
6. The matter should be dealt with confidentially.
7. Where resolution has not been possible and, particularly, where there is a likelihood of the offending behaviour continuing, either party or the principal teacher (or chairperson

of the board of management as the case may be) should refer the matter to the board of management in accordance with Stage 4 below.

Stage 4: Board of Management

1. It is open to any of the parties or the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to refer the matter to the board of management for investigation. The referral should be in writing and dated, and should include a copy of the written complaint.
2. The board of management should consider the issues and investigate the matter:
 - the Board may enquire into the background of the difficulties, including obtaining details on the sequence of initiatives taken at previous stages;
 - the Board or the Chairperson of the Board may meet teachers individually or collectively and may also request written submissions from the parties, having regard also to the principles of due process (cf. page 128);
 - the Board may request the principal teacher to furnish a written submission;
 - the Board may afford the parties an opportunity to present their case orally at a Board meeting in each other's presence;
 - following oral presentations, the board of management may designate the chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required or to work towards resolution;
 - the board of management may convene a

number of meetings in order to achieve resolution;

- the board of management shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution and shall deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem.

3. Having considered all matters, the board of management should reach a view on the matter not later than twenty school days after receipt of the written request/referral.

4. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has not occurred, both parties should be informed accordingly. No action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and appropriate action taken.

5. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has occurred, the Board should deal with the matter appropriately and effectively. This may include:

- the issuing of a clear warning that bullying/harassment is not acceptable in the school workplace and that it will not be tolerated;
- a demand that all forms of bullying/harassment cease and that acceptable patterns of interaction be established between the parties;
- an instruction to the offending party that he/she apologise/express regret or give an assurance that the bullying/harassment behaviour will cease;
- seeking a commitment to attend counselling or the welfare service;
- more serious disciplinary sanctions as

may be commensurate and appropriate, such as:

- oral warning
- written reprimand
- written warning
- final written warning
- suspension
- dismissal

6. As part of any resolution, the board of management should monitor the situation, and should put systems in place to ensure that it is kept informed that resolutions are being implemented. The board of management should keep matters under review.

Note: Boards are advised that the agreed procedures outlined here are currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA Office/www.cpsma.ie for updates and/or advice prior to using the procedures outlined herein.

C3 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following procedure for handling grievances in schools has been agreed between the INTO and the principal Management bodies.

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a mechanism for the resolution of a grievance which a teacher in a national school, including a principal teacher, has against

1. The board of management in respect of the exercise of any of its responsibilities for the governance of the school, or
2. the chairperson of the Board in an individual capacity, or
3. the principal teacher in respect of her/his duties and responsibilities for the organisation, conduct, and day to day activities of the school.

The Grievance Procedure shall generally relate to breaches of school rules, policies, procedures or practices. The Grievance Procedure shall not deal with curricular matters.

If a grievance, which concerns a matter covered by the Employment Equality Act (1998) or other relevant legislation, is referred to the Labour Court, this procedure shall not be used. Such a referral would serve to terminate the Grievance Procedure.

STAGE 1 The Principal

- 1 The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the principal that the Grievance Procedure is being invoked.
- 2 The teacher shall discuss the grievance with the principal teacher with a view to resolving it.
- 3 If the grievance is not resolved within ten school days, the teacher shall be entitled to invoke Stage 2 within a further ten school days.

STAGE 2 The Chairperson

- 1 The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the principal and chairperson of the board of management that Stage 2 of the Grievance Procedure is being invoked.
- 2 The teacher shall discuss the grievance with the chairperson of the Board with a view to resolving it.
- 3 The chairperson shall immediately take such steps as she/he considers appropriate to have the grievance resolved informally.
- 4 If the grievance is not resolved within ten school days, the teacher shall be entitled to invoke Stage 3 within a further ten school days.

STAGE 3 The Board of Management

- 1 The aggrieved teacher shall give notice in writing to the chairperson of the board of management that Stage 3 of the Grievance Procedure is being invoked.
- 2 The teacher shall make a written submission which shall include the details of the grievance(s) and the redress being sought. The submission shall be presented to the

chairperson for consideration by the board of management.

- 3 The normal rules of due process shall apply to the exchange of documentation, and accordingly, the chairperson shall copy the submission to the person against whom the grievance is being taken.
- 4 Where the grievance involves the principal teacher, she/he shall be requested by the chairperson to prepare a written response to the submission. The written response shall address all of the points made in the aggrieved teacher's submission and shall be furnished to the aggrieved teacher(s) within 10 school days of the date of the written submission. Similarly, where the grievance is against the chairperson of the board of management or the Board itself, the aggrieved teacher shall be entitled to a written response from the chairperson or the Board, as the case may be. Such response shall also be furnished within 10 school days.
- 5 The chairperson shall invite the aggrieved teacher to be in attendance at a hearing of the Board, which shall be held within ten school days of the date of the written response. The hearing shall afford each party to the grievance an opportunity to hear, at first hand, what the other party has to say, and also to question and/or respond to the other party.
- 6 In circumstances where the grievance is against the principal teacher, he/she shall attend at the Board hearing in an individual capacity and not as a member of the board of management. Similarly, where the grievance is against the chairperson of the board of management (in an individual capacity) he/she shall also attend at the Board hearing in an individual capacity and an Acting chairperson shall be appointed.

Further, the principal teacher or the chairperson, as the case may be, shall withdraw from the Board's deliberations and decision making on the matter.

- 7 Where appropriate, the parties shall be entitled to bring witnesses. The same principles of due process apply to hearing witnesses.
- 8 The Board shall try to resolve the grievance by conciliation and if the grievance is resolved the matter is concluded. If the Board is unable to resolve the grievance by conciliation it shall make a decision on the matter, except as provided under paragraph 9 below.
- 9 In cases where the grievance is against the Board itself, the Board shall hear the grievance as outlined above, shall try to resolve the matter by conciliation, but failing resolution, the matter may proceed to stage 4 in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 11 below.
- 10 The chairperson shall convey the outcome in writing to the parties within 5 school days of the hearing specified at 5 above.
- 11 The teacher shall have the right to invoke Stage 4 of the procedure:
 - A. if the Board fails to give a hearing to the aggrieved teacher;
 - B. if the chairperson fails to convey the outcome of the hearing within the specified period, or
 - C. if the teacher is unwilling to accept the outcome of Stage 3.

STAGE 4 An Independent Tribunal

- 1 The Teacher who wishes to proceed with an appeal to Stage 4 shall give notice of same, by letter, to the chairperson of the board of management within ten school days of receiving the written outcome of Stage 3 (or at the end of the period specified in 3.5, if the Board fails to arrange a hearing). The date of that letter shall be referred to as the 'date of appeal', and the teacher may include, in the letter, any additional arguments he/she wishes to put forward.
 - 2 On receipt of the letter of appeal, the chairperson of the board of management shall notify the patron (or a designated representative of the patron) and the General Secretary of the INTO (or a designated representative of the INTO) and invite these parties:
 - A. to select an agreed independent person to act as chairperson of a tribunal;
 - B. each to appoint a person who is not associated with the school to serve on the tribunal;
 - C. to arrange a meeting of the tribunal within 15 school days of the date of appeal.
 - 3 The chairperson of the board of management shall also furnish each member of the tribunal, prior to its first meeting with
 - A. with a report on the proceedings at each of the previous stages
 - B. and with
 - a copy of the aggrieved teacher's letter of appeal;
 - a copy of the aggrieved teacher's submission;
 - a copy of any written response;
 - any other relevant documentation.
- C. The Tribunal shall arrange a hearing(s) for the parties and shall ensure that the normal rules of due process and fair procedures apply, which include:
- that the parties shall be given reasonable notice of the hearing by the Tribunal. When notifying parties of the date of the hearing(s), the Tribunal should indicate to the parties concerned that, in the event of failure to appear without reasonable cause, the Tribunal may proceed to decide the case if considered appropriate;
 - that each party shall be afforded an opportunity to access and respond to relevant documentation, including the letter of appeal;
 - that the parties shall have an opportunity to hear, at first hand, what each has to say, and also to question or respond to the other party through the chairperson of the Tribunal;
 - that witnesses may attend as appropriate;
 - that the Tribunal itself shall be entitled to question each party or seek further information;
 - that, where appropriate, the Tribunal shall afford each party an opportunity to provide further information, on the clear understanding that the other party shall have an opportunity to access and respond to same;
 - that, if necessary, the Tribunal shall agree to adjournments.
- D. The Tribunal shall be considered a

domestic forum and, accordingly, neither Management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any hearings.

- E. The tribunal shall be empowered to conciliate, with a view to reaching a friendly settlement.
- F. Failing such a settlement the tribunal shall determine the issue by unanimous or majority vote.
- G. The tribunal's decision shall be conveyed in writing by the chairperson of the tribunal to all the parties and shall be final and binding.

Please note that any expenses involved in Stage 4 will be shared by the parties who nominate the tribunal provided that prior sanction for same has been obtained from INTO and the relevant Management Body.

NOTES

- 1 Until such time as the dispute is resolved or determined, the aggrieved teacher shall continue to carry out the legitimate instructions of the principal teacher or the board of management as the case may be.
- 2 The Grievance Procedure shall also apply where two or more teachers share a grievance.
- 3 Where a principal teacher, or a principal teacher and one or more other teachers, share a grievance, Stages 2, 3 and 4 of the procedure shall apply.
- 4 Where the grievance is against an individual chairperson or the board of management itself, Stages 2, 3 and 4 of the procedure shall apply.
- 5 Where there is a single Manager as opposed to a board of management, Stages 1, 2 and 4 only shall apply. In these circumstances the aggrieved teacher shall supply a written submission at Stage 4, and the normal procedures of due process will apply to the exchange of documentation and the right of response.
- 6 An aggrieved teacher(s) may be represented at Stages 3 and 4 by the INTO Staff Representative or by a branch or district committee member or by a teacher colleague.
- 7 Attention is also drawn to Clause 15 of the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011, particularly with regard to disclosure of interest.
- 8 Where the aggrieved teacher is a member of a religious order, the INTO will consult her/his representative association before nominating a member of the independent tribunal envisaged in Stage 4.
- 9 A school day is a day on which the school is in operation.
- 10 Any difficulty arising out of the implementation of this procedure shall be referred for resolution to the parties to this agreement.

LABOUR RELATIONS MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION SERVICES [SOURCE: LRC]

The Labour Relations Commission:

The resolution and prevention of employment relations disputes, whether collective or individual, is the core responsibility of the Commission. Services are focused around the Commission's remit to develop and enhance good industrial relations in Irish workplaces, across all sectors, large, small, public and private.

Advice and Support

LRC **Advisory Service** provides hands on assistance in regard to any issue arising in the workplace. Such issues could include, for example, reviewing industrial relations practices and procedures in a workplace, recommending improvements and facilitating implementation. It can advise and assist organisations on any aspect of industrial relations in their workplace, for example review (or develop) effective workplace procedures in areas such as effective communications, grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Support for Individual or Small Group Relationships

LRC **Workplace Mediation Service** is focused on providing a quick, confidential and effective remedy to workplace issues involving individuals or small groups of employees. It is particularly suited to issues around a breakdown in a workplace relationship or conflicts arising in the workplace generally. Mediators seek to resolve the problem in an informal and non-adversarial with a focus on the future working relationship of those involved.

Training

LRC offers training on a variety of aspects of the employment relationship including the operation of workplace procedures (Grievance, Disciplinary and Dignity in the Workplace), Effective Communications, Negotiation Process and the Management of Workplace Change. Training is customised to the needs of organisations, and is delivered on site by the LRC team of experienced practitioners.

Further Information

For information on any of the above services, log onto www.lrc.ie or www.workplacerelations.ie

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF SNAs

Procedures for the Appointment of a Special Needs Assistant

Appendix E, page 50 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Advertisements

Appendix E, page 50 -51 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Electronic Applications

Appendix D, page 51 - 52 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Selection Board

Appendix E, page 52 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Qualification Criteria for Appointment as Special Needs Assistant

Appendix E, page 52- 53 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

DES Circular 21/2011

Short Listing of Applications

Appendix E, page 52- 53 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Interviews

Appendix E, page 53 - 54 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*

Appointing the Successful Candidate

Appendix E, page 54 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure*. Letter of Offer on www.cpsma.ie

Post Appointment Procedures

CPSMA Guidance Note available on www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

Letter of Appointment

Sample Letter of Appointment - available on www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

Order of Seniority

Appendix E, page 54 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution for Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*, Circular59//2006

Garda Vetting

Appendix E, page 55 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* and DES Circular 63/2010 available on www.cpsma.ie

Assessment of Medical Fitness

Appendix E, page 55 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* and DES Circular 34/2010, available on www.cpsma.ie

Contracts of Employment

Appendix E, page 55 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* and DES Circular 15/05 available on www.cpsma.ie. Contracts are available in the Appointments Section of the website.

Notification of the Appointment to the DES

Appendix E, page 55 of *Boards of Management of National Schools - Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011* available on www.cpsma.ie

Special Needs Assistant Appointment Form

Available on www.cpsma.ie - Appointments Section

SNA-On-Line Claims System Information

Contact Non Teacher Payroll at DES.

Change of Staff Form

Contact Non Teacher Payroll at DES.

Redundancy for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 58/2006, 59/2006

SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS – GENERAL INFORMATION

(These circulars are all available at www.cpsma.ie – SNA Section)

SNA CONTRACTS

Standard Contract of Employment

DES Circular 15/2005

Fixed-Term Contract

available at www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section

Specified Purpose Contract

available at www.cpsma.ie – Appointments Section

Sick Leave for Special Needs Assistants - General Information

DES Circular 33/2010,

Occupational Health Scheme for SNAs DES Circular 34/2010

OHS Operating Procedures [Revised 2011]

available at www.cpsma.ie – SNA Section

Employee Assistance Service

available at www.cpsma.ie – SNA Section

Brief Absences for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 32/2010

Maternity, Adoptive and Paternity Leave for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 13/2005

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 72/2011

Public Service (Croke Park) Agreement -Special Needs Assistants

DES Circular 71/2011

ANCILLARY STAFF – GENERAL INFORMATION

Caretaker – Contracts of Employment: available at www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

1. Standard Contract of Employment
2. Fixed-term Contract
3. Specified Purpose Contract

Secretary – Contracts of Employment: available at www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

1. Standard Contract of Employment
2. Fixed-term Contract
3. Specified Purpose Contract

Cleaner – Contracts of Employment: available at www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

1. Standard Contract of Employment
2. Fixed-term Contract
3. Specified Purpose Contract

Bus Escorts – Contracts of Employment: available at www.cpsma.ie Appointments Section.

1. Standard Contract of Employment
 2. Fixed-term Contract
 3. Specified Purpose Contract
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SECTION 5

Parents and the School

Overview

This section deals with the following issues:

- Circulars to be drawn to the attention of parents
- Parents as Partners
- Partnership between the Parents' Association and the Board of Management
- Arrangements for parent teacher/staff meetings
- Parental status and access to school communications
- Parental Complaints Procedure

INTRODUCTION

In line with the provisions of the Irish Constitution, the Board of Management acknowledges that parents are the primary educators of their children. Much of the protection for Catholic schools derives from rights granted to the parents under the provisions of the Constitution.

The Board of Management should strive to ensure that parents find the school an open, welcoming, inclusive place. There should be a parents' association in each school. The following extract is from the Education Act 1998:

S26

- (1) The parents of students of a recognised school may establish, and maintain from among their number, a parents' association for that school and membership of that association shall be open to all parents of students of that school.
- (2) A parents' association shall promote the interests of the students in a school in cooperation with the board, principal, teachers, students of a school and for that purpose may –
 - (a) advise the principal or the board on any matter relating to the school and the principal or board, as the case may be, shall have regard to any such advice, and
 - (b) adopt a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the principal, in the operation of the school.

(3) The board shall promote contact between the school, parents of students in that school and the community and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to parents who wish to establish a parents' association and to a parents' association when it is established.

(4) (a) A parents' association shall, following consultation with its members, make rules governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs.

(b) Where a parents' association is affiliated to a national association of parents, the rules referred to in paragraph (a) shall be in accordance with guidelines issued by that national association of parents with the concurrence of the Minister.

Parents' associations may choose to affiliate to the National Parents' Council and should be encouraged to do so. National Parents Council offer training for Parent Associations on their role and will deliver this training in their school. (NPC Primary Head Office is at 12 Marlborough Court, Dublin 1. Tel 01-887 4034.)

In a spirit of collaboration and trust, parents will recognise that there are areas of school activity that belong to the professional work of the teachers. There will also be a recognition that certain areas of responsibility (e.g. finance) belong to the Board of Management.

A parents' association is entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the association. Full accounts must be maintained and presented at the parents' association AGM, in accordance with the rules of the association.

The parents' association should consult with the Board about fundraising for the school or school projects. The approval of the Board is needed before these funds are raised. The expenditure of these funds is by the Board of Management, in consultation with the parents' association. The Board prepares a total account of income and expenditure at the end of each school year and this is available to parents. (*Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure*, Clause 19)

Any funds raised must be used for the purpose/s for which the money was collected. If, in exceptional circumstances, it becomes unnecessary for the Board to use all the funds collected for the purpose specified, the Board will communicate this to the parents' association and, where appropriate, the local community. In any event, the funds must be used for the school. The change of purpose for which the funds are used will be decided by the Board in consultation with the parents' association committee.

The Board, in consultation with the school principal teacher, should ensure that arrangements are made for parents to meet class teachers on a regular basis.

Parents will naturally be concerned about the welfare and progress of their own children. They are entitled to have access to records kept by the school relating to the progress and education of their child. (Education Act 1998 Section 9(g)).

If a parent has a particular difficulty with the school, the matter should be referred in the first instance to the class teacher and subsequently, if necessary, to the principal teacher. The matter should be dealt with informally, if possible.

If it becomes necessary to deal more formally with the matter, the agreed complaints procedure should be followed (see page 155).

Anonymous complaints about the teachers or about any matter connected with the school will not be considered by the Board of Management. Individual members of the Board should not agree to bring anonymous verbal messages to the Board of Management meeting. Board members should advise people who approach them with complaints or requests that the matter should be referred to the principal teacher or to the chairperson of the Board, as appropriate.

PARENTS & DES CIRCULARS

The attention of parents should be drawn to the circulars that issue from the Department and which are available on the DES website www.education.ie. This could be achieved by referring the matter to the parents association.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

The school is regarded as an extension of the home and an active partnership between parents and teachers makes this a reality, especially in the eyes of the young child, who is the central figure. Research shows that parental interests and attitudes to school, to books and to education are the single most important influence on a child's learning. (from Parents' Associations – Making Them Work, NPC-P))

In addition to section 26 Education Act 1998, the relationship between parents and the school is referenced in several other sections of the 1998 Act. In particular, it should be noted that the school is required to:

- Promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school. Section 9(d).
- Ensure that parents of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, have access in the prescribed manner to records kept by that school relating to the progress of that student in her/his education. Section 9(g).
- Manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that Board has responsibility. Section 15(i).
- Publish, in such manner as the Board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy, principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with. Section 15(2) (d).
- Make available to the parents the annual certified accounts of monies received from the Oireachtas and the expenditure of same. Section 18.

- A Board shall establish procedures for informing the parents of students in the school of matters relating to the operation and performance of the school and such procedures may include the publication and circulation to parents, teachers and other staff and a student council where one has been established of a report on the operation and performance of the school in any school year, with particular reference to the achievement of objectives as set out in the school plan provided for under section 21. Section 20.
- The school plan shall be prepared in accordance with such directions, including directions relating to consultation with the parents, the patron, staff and students of the school, as may be given from time to time by the Minister in relation to school plans. Section 21.
- A Board shall make arrangements for the circulation of copies of the school plan to the patron, parents, teachers and other staff of the school. Section 21(4).

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION AND THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Parents are partners and stakeholders in the school. They can and should contribute to the school plan, school policies and pupils' curriculum experiences.

Research shows that parental involvement in their children's education positively affects the child's performance at school. The impact is the same regardless of ethnic background, family income, maternal level of education, or child's gender.

Both the Parent Association and the Board of Management have the best interest of the child as a common goal in the running of the school. To fulfil their duties as set out in the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management and the Parent Association need to have effective ways of communicating with one another.

Ways of communicating between the Parent Association and the Board of Management may include:

- An annual meeting, early in each school year, with a jointly planned agenda, to discuss ideas for working together, to share information and to exchange views.
- A social event where parents, teachers, and Board of Management members can meet and get to know one another.
- The Parent Association's committee meeting agenda may include a report [when appropriate] from the parents' nominees on the Board of Management. [See Clause 8 at p.18 '*Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*'].
- Meetings between the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Chairperson of the Parent Association committee.

The parent nominees elected by parents are not on the Board to represent parents but are there to manage the school. While they may bring a parental perspective to all meetings, their primary function is the managing of the school.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARENT /TEACHER AND STAFF MEETINGS

DES Circular 14/04, available at www.cpsma.ie Parents Section.

PARENTAL STATUS AND ACCESS TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

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

In response to the large number of queries, the following grid has been prepared to assist schools regarding parental status and access to information. (A more detailed consideration of the issues arising can be found below)

Definitions:

In this 'guidance note' -

- **Guardianship** means the right to make decisions concerning the upbringing and welfare of the child as well as having a duty to ensure that the child is properly maintained and cared for
- **Custody** is the day-to-day care and control of the child
- **Access** gives a parent a 'temporary' right to visit with the child

A	Parents married to each other & living together	Mother and Father have equal guardianship and custody rights over the child unless a court order, specifying otherwise exists e.g. a care or supervision order. Where necessary the school should seek a letter from the parent's solicitor confirming the content of the <u>relevant section</u> of any such court order to clarify its impact [if any] on the school.	<p>Both parents are entitled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be consulted in regard to educational welfare of child • notice of formal parent teacher meetings • copies of school reports • notice of meetings with NEPS, SENO etc • notice of in-school/after school programmes • notice of school closures • notice of preparation meetings for the various sacraments /other meetings. <p>One letter/communication to both parents will suffice.</p>
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B	Parents married to each other, separated & living apart	<p>In addition to (A) above, parents may have an ‘informal arrangement’ as to the custody of and access to their child/ren. Where necessary, schools should request details of any such arrangement.</p> <p>‘Living apart’ includes situations where couples who have separated continue to live under the same roof as well as situations where one or other has left the family home.</p>	<p>Both parents entitled to information as set out in (A) above.</p> <p>A separate letter/communication should be sent to each parent.</p>
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C	Parents married to each other, living apart with a ‘Separation Agreement’ in place	<p>In addition to (A) above, the ‘Separation Agreement’ will detail any formal arrangement between the parents in relation to the custody and access arrangements. Custody of the child normally rests with the parent with whom the child primarily resides. Parents may also have joint custody. Both parents remain guardians to the child. Where necessary the school should seek a letter from the parent’s solicitor confirming the content of the relevant section of any such agreement to clarify custody and access arrangements in relation to how these may impact on the school.</p>	<p>Both parents entitled to information as set out in (A) above.</p> <p>A separate letter/communication should be sent to each parent.</p>
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D	Parents married to each other, living apart & either one or both is in a new relationship	<p>In addition to (A) above, the fact that either parent is in a new relationship or has remarried has no impact on the guardianship or custody rights of the natural parents.</p> <p>New partners have no statutory rights in relation to the child but may have a role with regard to collection from school etc. Communications from the school to new partners should be limited to that which is agreed between the parents or that which has been provided for by a court order.</p>	<p>Both parents entitled to information as set out in (A) above.</p> <p>A separate letter/communication should be sent to each parent.</p> <p>No letter/communication should be issued to new partners unless there is express agreement between the parties or unless such is provided for in a court order</p>
E	Parents unmarried & living together or living apart	<p>The school should co-operate with the arrangements in place between the parties regarding the child unless a dispute arises.</p> <p>The natural mother only has automatic right of guardianship. A natural father can apply to the court seeking an order granting him guardianship, custody and access rights. In circumstances where the natural father is asserting his rights, the school should seek a letter from the parent's solicitor confirming the content of the relevant section of any such court order to clarify any such rights.</p> <p>Alternatively, provided the father is named on the child's birth certificate, the natural mother can agree by statutory declaration to grant the father such rights whereby he is appointed guardian. The school should seek a copy of the statutory declaration.</p> <p>Should the natural mother and father marry each other, both then have equal guardianship and custody rights as set out in A above.</p>	<p>The natural father does not have an automatic entitlement to the information set out in (A) above.</p> <p>A letter/communication goes to the natural mother and to the father if he is in possession of either a court order or a statutory declaration</p>

F	Parents unmarried & in new relationships	<p>The natural parents' rights are as set out at E above.</p> <p>New partners have no statutory rights in relation to the child but may have a role with regard to collection from school etc.</p> <p>Communications from the school to new partners should be limited to that which is agreed between the natural parents or that which has been provided for by a court order.</p>	<p>The natural parents are entitled to the information as set out in (E) above.</p> <p>A letter/communication goes to the natural mother and to the father if he if he is in possession of a court order or a statutory declaration.</p> <p>No letter/communication should be issued to new partners unless there is express agreement between the parties or unless such is provided for in a court order.</p>
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Court orders pertaining to children are subject to the "in camera" rule and as such should not be shown to third parties. This is why it is more appropriate for schools to seek a letter from the parent's solicitor confirming the relevant aspects of the court order, rather than seeking a copy of the relevant extract of the actual court order.

A school should be aware of its obligation to comply with the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003, in particular when handling 'sensitive' information pertaining to families.

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Section 28 Education Act: (not yet commenced)

S28.

(1) The Minister, following consultation with patrons of recognised schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, may from time to time prescribe procedures in accordance with which—

(a) the parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal to the board against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school,

(b) grievances of students, or their parents, relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under paragraph (a) or section 29), shall be heard, and

(c) appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.

(2) In prescribing procedures for the purposes of this section the Minister shall have regard to the desirability of determining appeals and resolving grievances in the school concerned.

CPSMA/INTO Agreed Parental Complaints Procedure:

Boards are advised that this procedure is currently subject to review. Boards should check with CPSMA office and/or www.cpsma.ie for updates and advice as to how to proceed to deal with such complaints.

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**Introduction**

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the board of management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- I. on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- II. frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school;
- III. complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

- 1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.

- 1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the principal teacher with a view to resolving it.
- 1.3 If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/ guardian should raise the matter with the chairperson of the board of management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

- 2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the chairperson of the board of management.
- 2.2 The chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

- 3.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
 - (a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
 - (b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4

- 1.1 If the complaint is still not resolved the chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.2 (b).
- 1.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.
- 1.3 If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
 - (a) The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
 - (b) The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
 - (c) The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
 - (d) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
 - (e) The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
 - (f) The meeting of the board of management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 (b).

Stage 5

- 5.1 When the Board has completed its investigation, the chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.
- 5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.
- 5.3 This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years;
- 5.4 CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party 3 months' notice of intention to do so.

(In this agreement 'days' means school days.)

SECTION 6

Insurance and Health & Safety

Overview

This section on insurance deals with the following issues:

- Insurance
- Insurance of Members of the Boards of Management of Primary Schools
- Procedures and Record keeping
- Notification of Claims
- Costs and Settlements
- Supervision of Pupils Outside Official School Opening Hours
- School Finance
- Risk Management - School Extensions / Construction Alterations
- Health & Safety
- Controls
- Critical incidents
- Accidents in schools
- Accident Report Form
- Reporting to Health and Safety Authority (HSA)

[Article submitted by Allianz plc. – January 2012]

INSURANCE

It is the duty of the Board of Management (delegated by the Trustees) to put in place and maintain comprehensive insurance cover for the school. The Allianz School Custodian Policy is recommended to all schools.

It should be noted that where alternative insurance quotations are being considered, it is essential that there is comparison of key cover differentials. School Boards of Management are required to refer to the patron / Diocesan Office before any decision is taken in relation to the placement of insurance cover with an Insurer other than Allianz. This protocol ensures that the legal liability of the patron and Trustees is fully protected at all times.

Confirmation is required from Boards of Management that school insurances are in accordance with the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy and that all categories of insurance detailed below are in place.

- (1) Property Damage (Including Consequential Loss cover up to 20%)
Cover: "Material Damage All Risks" (including larceny & subsidence).
- (2) Money Cover: Loss of Money belonging to the School (including financial loss following misuse of any credit card belonging to the School) up to Allianz policy limits.
- (3) Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity required - €30,000,000 inclusive of Law Costs in respect of any one event.
- (4) Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity required - €30,000,000 inclusive of Law Costs any one Event.

- (5) Professional Indemnity: Limit of Indemnity required - €6,500,000 inclusive of Law Costs in any one Period of Insurance.
- (6) Trustees', Directors' and Officers' Liability /Limit of indemnity: €2,500,000 inclusive of Law costs in any one Period of Insurance.
- (7) Employment Practices Liability: Limit of Indemnity - €2,500,000 inclusive of Law Costs in any one Period of Insurance.
- (8) Fidelity Guarantee Limit: €100,000 in any one Period of Insurance.
- (9) Legal Expenses/Limit of Indemnity - €1,000,000 in any one Period of Insurance.
- (10) Staff Personal Accident.

Full details of cover and of all applicable terms, conditions and exclusions are contained in the policy document which will be provided by Allianz plc. at your request.

The prompt payment of the premium to ensure continuous cover is a most serious responsibility of the Board of Management.

The Board should ensure that there are procedures within the school for recording every accident. A report form for every incident of injury to persons or of damage to property should be sent without delay to the insurance company and to the Chairperson of the Board.

If the Board of Management is about to initiate any procedures that may eventually call on the Professional Indemnity policy of the Board, the insurance company should be informed immediately as prior approval is required in many instances

Local representatives of Allianz plc. are available to answer queries from Chairpersons of Boards of Management.

INSURANCE OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Allianz insurance policy covers the individual Members of the Board and the Board as a corporate body, and the Boards successors, for any claim made by any individual or a group against the individual members of a Board and the Board as a corporate body. This cover applies providing the Board Members are acting in good faith and within the provisions of;

- The 1998 Education Act;
- The Rules and Procedures for BOM;
- The Rules for National Schools;
- The Directive of the Patron.

The Board and the individual Members of a Board as a corporate body and as individuals are also indemnified for any claims made against them under Section 14 of the Education Act 1998.

There have recently been considerable comments in the media regarding the possible exposure of individual Members of Boards of Management to legal actions relating to criminal acts by employees of the School Board. To allay concerns of existing Members of Boards of Management and prospective new members, we wish to confirm the following:

The Indemnity to Management Section of the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy provides cover in relation to legal liabilities of the Board of Management and individual members of the Board of Management arising from the performance of their duties as a

member or as a Board of Management. The indemnity provided is in respect of legal costs and damages incurred in connection with a claim.

Critically the cover provided under the Allianz policy includes legal liability that attaches to the Board of Management, collectively and individually, as a consequence of a criminal act by an employee or other person for whom the Board is currently or historically responsible.

Naturally, there are terms, exceptions and conditions attached to the policy, but it is important to state that there has never been a case where a Board of Management currently insured by Allianz has been left without an indemnity in relation to such claims.

In effect, a Board, or a Member of a Board, who do (does) not consciously set out to commit a criminal act are provided with cover in the dispensation of their duties. It is correct to state that the policy does not afford any protection to the perpetrator of any such criminal act.

If you have any queries or require any further clarification regarding the foregoing, please contact our Education Team at 01 613 3966, your local Allianz representative, or your Insurance Broker.

PROCEDURES AND RECORD KEEPING

The need for schools to give on-going and detailed consideration to the issues of procedures and record keeping has been a feature in relation to the settlement of a number of legal liability claims under the following insurance covers:

- Employer's liability;
- Public liability;

- Professional Indemnity;
- Employment practices liability.

Insurers have successfully defended claims where appropriate records were maintained and procedures were prepared and actively pursued. Unfortunately, insurers have also experienced situations where the absence of such records and procedures contributed adversely to claim settlements, for example:

- Absence of a safety statement (as required by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act)
- Absence or inappropriateness of policies and procedures in relation to issues such as admissions, bullying, discipline, equality, staff appointments etc.
- Absence of written confirmation from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in relation to:
 - Temporary teachers;
 - Additional teachers;
 - Approval and withdrawal of approval for special needs assistants,
 - Employment Contracts.
- Lack of clarity in relation to arrival and dismissal of pupils, after-school activities (games etc), school trips and supervision.

Insurers do appreciate that changes in legislation, largely driven by the necessity to comply with EU directives, and compliance with procedures established by the Department of Education and Skills increase demands on schools. It is essential to bear in mind, however, that compliance with such legislation is not optional – it is a legal requirement. Non-compliance can expose schools to the possibility of the incurrence of fines or

penalties. Furthermore, such non-compliance can impact adversely on the settlement of claims.

The adoption and utilisation of sets of appropriate procedures, including record keeping, will result in benefits to schools in a number of ways, such as:

- Assist in ensuring the protection of school assets;
- Consistency of approach to addressing issues and problems
- Improved quality of record keeping;
- Reduction in the number of delays/queries;
- Reduction in costs/expenses;
- Improved level of defence in claim situations.

Appropriate records of all discussions, meetings, agreements etc. should be maintained by Boards of Management. Approvals from the Department of Education and Skills should always be recorded in writing. The implementation of such an approach by Boards of Management will be of considerable benefit in avoiding any subsequent confusion or misunderstanding in relation to what should or should not be done or what was agreed or approved. Furthermore, as we have said earlier, in the event of any claims occurring under insurance policies, the availability of such records can be crucial to the success or otherwise of any defence.

With regard to the issue of insurance in relation to procedures and record keeping, the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy provides cover for the legal liability of the School and the Board of Management in respect of:

- Bodily injury to employees – (Employers Liability Insurance);

- Accidental bodily injury to third parties and accidental damage to third party property (Public Liability Insurance);
- Breach of duty arising from any negligent act, error or omission, breach of warranty, of trust or confidentiality libel or slander committed in good faith – (Professional Indemnity Insurance);
- Claims arising out of wrongful employment practices (Employment Practices Liability Insurance)
 - all arising out of or in connection with a school-related activity, which is defined in the policy as:

‘any activity usual to a school which is carried out with the full knowledge and authority of and under the control of the Board of Management/Governors of the School or of any other person specifically authorised by them’.

The policy cover is not dependent on or subject to the implementation of procedures, therefore resulting legal liability attaching to the School and/or the Board of Management is covered, subject as always to the terms, conditions, limitations and exclusions of the policy. However, the existence of appropriate procedures and written records will enhance the possibilities of successfully defending claims, thus reducing the cost of claims, which, in turn, will have a positive impact on premiums. It is therefore in all our interests that Schools should give serious attention to the issues of procedures and record keeping.

NOTIFICATION OF CLAIMS

The Policy Condition (condition 6 claims procedure) in relation to the notification of these types of claims, requires the school to give immediate written notice to the company on:

- receiving notification of a claim; or
- becoming aware of any circumstances which might reasonably be expected to result in a claim irrespective of the views of the insured as to the validity or otherwise of such claim or prospective claim.

As can be seen from the above, the company must be immediately advised not only of actual claims but also of circumstances that may give rise to a claim irrespective of the views of the school.

Failure to notify claims or circumstances in a timely manner:

- can seriously affect the ability of the company to adequately and appropriately investigate and any related circumstances;
- prejudices the establishment of a position by the company in relation to acceptance/settlement/defence of any claim or circumstances.

COSTS AND SETTLEMENTS

In addition to the above, the claims condition in the policy also contains the following requirements:

- No admission, repudiation, offer, promise, payment or indemnity shall be given by or on behalf of the insured without the written consent of the company;
- The Company shall be entitled if it so desires to take over and conduct in the name

of the insured or any indemnified party the defence or settlement of any claim or to prosecute in the name of the Insured or any indemnified party for its own benefit any claim for indemnity or damages or otherwise. The company shall have full discretion in the conduct of any proceedings and in the settlement of any claim and the Insurer or any indemnified party shall give all such information and assistance as the company may require.

In other words, the School must not enter into a discussion or negotiation with the claimant(s) without the prior written consent of the Company. Furthermore, the Company is entitled to conduct all negotiations in relation to the handling and settlement of any claim.

Additionally, under the legal expenses section of the policy, cover only applies to legal costs and expenses that are reasonably and properly incurred by the insured with the prior approval of the Company.

Going Forward

The Cost of claims has a direct bearing on premiums charged and it is incumbent on all Boards of Management to strive to reduce claims costs into the future.

Strict compliance with policy terms and conditions by all schools will play a significant role in the control of claims costs, which, in turn, will have a positive impact on premiums. In the circumstances, the necessity for schools to ensure that they comply with policy terms and conditions is very much self-evident.

For more information in relation to the notification of claims please refer to Chapter 11 of the Allianz Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in the School on the schools website: www.allianz.ie/schools.

SUPERVISION OF PUPILS OUTSIDE OFFICIAL SCHOOL OPENING HOURS

Under the legal principle of *in loco parentis* the duty of care imposed on a school is to take such care of pupils as a careful parent would of his/her children. The school has a duty to supervise pupils at all times during which they are in the charge of the school. If the school allows access to the school premises before the official opening hours then the duty to supervise applies. In the same way, where pupils are on the school premises after hours a similar duty applies.

It is not unusual for parents to leave their children at the school some time before the start of the school day, and likewise collect their children some time after school finishes. While parents are not entitled to arbitrarily attempt to absolve themselves from the responsibility for the safety of their children, such action by parents does not wholly absolve the school of their responsibility to provide supervision.

Unfortunately this is a dilemma that holds little sway with the courts, who will argue that the practice of parents leaving pupils at a school before hours or collecting them after hours is one which is known to schools, and within acceptance of that fact there is an obligation to provide supervision.

Nevertheless schools can alleviate the potential exposure to claims in this regard by issuing a letter/note to all parents at the beginning of term advising them of the times during which the school can accept responsibility for their children. Such a letter/note is effectively in the form of a disclaimer and can prove to be a useful deterrent against claims made against the school. While it is doubtful if such disclaimers carry the desired protection in law, we do, in general terms, recommend their usage.

As regards the school transport system, schools are not party to this, and the fact that the children are conveyed to or from school by bus does not impose an additional obligation on the school. As we have stated, it is important that parents are made aware that no arrangements exist for the supervision of their children who arrive at the school, whether by school bus or otherwise, before the official opening times. A similar situation arises in respect of children who remain after school hours awaiting collection by the school bus.

Please refer to pages 57 and 58 of the '**Allianz Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security in School**' for a recommended wording in relation to the notification of official school times.

Where a Principal or other member of staff takes it upon themselves to voluntarily provide supervision outside of official school hours, they could be deemed by a court to have created a precedent, and consequently they could be held to be liable if, having established the practice, they fail to do so for some reason or another.

Notwithstanding all of the foregoing, it is important to emphasise that cover under the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy in respect of accidental injury or damage, as defined in the Policy, will, subject to the policy terms, definitions, conditions, limitations and exclusions, operate where the school is held to be legally liable, whether such injury or damage occurs before, during or after official school times.

SCHOOL FINANCE

[Cf. Pages 79-81 and 90-92]

The control and management of school finances requires that appropriate procedures are put in place to ensure that all income and expenditure is recorded and accounted for in a clear and precise manner.

Section 18 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states that a Board of Management 'shall keep all proper and usual accounts and records of all monies received by it or expenditure of such monies incurred by it and shall ensure that in each year all such accounts are properly audited or certified in accordance with best accounting practice'.

As a minimum the following procedures should be adopted:

- (a) As an integral part of any selection process, the veracity of references of persons who will handle money and financial records should always be verified.
- (b) All expenditure should be approved by the Board of Management.
- (c) The number of accounts operated by a school should be kept to a minimum, preferably one.
- (d) Cheque books should always be kept in a secure location with access limited to approved persons only.
- (e) Authority to sign cheques should always be by at least two of three approved signatories, one of whom must be the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the other the Treasurer.
- (f) Pre-signing of cheques should not be permitted in any circumstances
- (g) There should be a requirement that all requests for cheques to be signed be accompanied by a cheque requisition which details the following
 - (i) the amount to be paid,
 - (ii) who the cheque is payable to,
 - (iii) include an invoice for the amount requested or full details of the purpose of the expenditure.
- (h) All payments which are made to employees, with the exception of the reimbursement of vouched and approved expenses, must be taxed in line with the requirements of the Revenue Commissioners.
- (i) Expenses should only be reimbursed where accompanied by an appropriate expenses claim, which contains details of the date, the purpose for which the expense was incurred and, where appropriate, supporting receipts/vouchers.
- (j) All payments should be made by crossed cheque or electronic transfer (such as direct debit etc) only.
- (k) Where the school operates a petty cash account, the following procedures should be implemented:
 - (i) The account should be operated by one nominated person.
 - (ii) Pre-numbered petty cash dockets should be used for every transaction.
 - (iii) Dockets should be signed by the recipient and be supported with details of the purpose for which the cash is required together with receipts where as appropriate.
 - (iv) The account should be reconciled and approved by the treasurer on a monthly basis.

- Appropriate records of all income should be maintained, including source, date of receipt, purpose etc. Receipts should be issued in all instances, without exception:
 - (i) All money should be kept in a securely locked safe.
 - (ii) Cheques and cash should be deposited in a timely manner.
 - (iii) Bank accounts should be reconciled on a monthly basis to ensure bank balances are in order.
- Where school credit cards are issued, clear and concise guidelines regarding usage of such cards should be issued to each approved user. Statements should be reconciled and signed off on a monthly basis and should be accompanied by supporting receipts and details of the purpose for which the expense was incurred.
- Grants received from the Department of Education must be expended in accordance with the Department guidelines and spent during the specified period. Balances must be repaid to the Department as required and must not be used for other purposes.
- Fundraising for the benefit of a school should only be with the prior approval of the Board of Management. Full details of all connected income and expenditure should be maintained and submitted to the Board for approval.
- On any occasion where a large amount of cash is being collected, appropriate security measures should be implemented. Of particular importance in this regard is of those handling the cash. Regrettably many criminals are prepared to resort to violence in their attempts to obtain money.

Therefore all persons handling money on behalf of the school should be specifically advised that where there is a danger to personal safety from criminals demanding money – hand it over. Money can be replaced!

- The basis on which the Board of Management is allowed to borrow funds should be formally recorded, including any and all limitations, such as source, purpose, amounts etc.
- School accounts must be properly audited or certified annually in accordance with accounting practice:
- In addition, interim internal audits should be carried out as an integral part of any finance control procedures implemented by schools
- At each Board of Management meeting, an income and expenditure account should be presented to the Board. This should include the following:
 - payments made
 - payments for approval
 - latest bank statement including reconciliation.

Approval by the Board should be recorded in the meeting minutes.

RISK MANAGEMENT - SCHOOL EXTENSIONS / CONSTRUCTION /ALTERATIONS

It is important for all schools to realise that the Allianz Custodian School Protection Policy specifically excludes liability arising from or in connection with such activities, and consequently separate insurance cover is required in respect of work of this nature.

In view of the significant increase in exposure presented by such activities, we always recommend that all such work should be carried out by "bona fide" Contractors experienced in the type of work to be carried out and who carry their own separate Public Liability and Employers' Liability insurances. Taking this approach ensures that claims arising in connection with the work are dealt with under the Contractor's insurances and do not therefore impact on School premiums.

Confirmation that the Contractor does carry such insurance should be obtained prior to commencement of the work, including the following:

- that cover is provided for the contract
- such insurances are operative and will remain so during the currency of the contract
- the limit of indemnity provided by such insurances is not less than €6,500,000
- such insurances provide an indemnity to the Insured.

HEALTH & SAFETY

All work of this nature is subject to the requirements of current Health & Safety legislation. While there are implications for schools under the provision of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, for example, - Section 17 which requires a person who commissions or procures construction work to appoint a Competent Person to ensure that the work is carried out safely - the principal duties arise under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 1993 and the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 1995 and 2001.

The Construction Regulations apply to;

- A. All building, civil engineering or engineering work,
- B. Maintenance work on buildings or services,
- C. Conversion, renovation or decoration,
- D. High pressure cleaning, and all work of a similar nature other than privately commissioned domestic work.

The Regulations impose the following duties on "the person or organisation who commissions the work" - i.e. School Management

- appoint a "competent" person (or Company) to act as Project Supervisor for the design stage known as PSD
- appoint a "competent" person (or Company) to act as Project Supervisor for the construction stage - known as PSC
- keep and maintain a Safety File as defined in the Regulations and where necessary make it available for the future maintenance, alteration, renovation or other work on the structure. Where a property or structure is disposed of, the safety file must be passed to the new owner.

The duties of the PSD and the PSC are defined in detail in the Regulations. The Regulations do not, unfortunately, define the term "competent". However, in practice a qualified architect would be "competent" to carry out the duties of the PSD and a "bona fide" contractor experienced in the type of work to be carried out should be "competent" to carry out the duties of the PSC.

It is important to be fully aware however that the onus is on School Management to be satisfied that both the PSD & PSC are "competent". Additionally, it must be appreciated that compliance with the regulations is not optional - it is a statutory obligation.

CONTROLS

Work of this nature creates physical hazards such as debris, cables/hoses etc over walkways, falling objects, holes in floors and grounds, equipment and use of hazardous materials. The following are examples of measures which should be taken to reduce the potential for losses:

- Require a written contract for all work to be carried out, including but not limited to the nature and timing of the work, areas within which it is contained (fencing), pupil requirements, emergency/evacuation procedures, security and welfare facilities
- Provide a copy of your Safety Statement to the Contractor before s/he commences work on site. This should include controls and rules for contractors, to ensure the protection of health and safety of staff, pupils contractors and others who may be affected when contractors are engaged in the school
- No cutting, welding, and/or any application of heat ("hot work"), without a written hot work permit
- Scaffolding and other access equipment must be erected and maintained in accordance with current Regulations and Codes of Practice
- Smoking is prohibited
- All entrances and access routes must be kept clear at all times and free from obstruction
- Appropriate signage should be erected
- Implementation of agreed procedures in relation to the storage and use of any hazardous materials. Such materials must be stored and used in accordance with manufacturers recommendations
- Review the Contractors plans for protection of the site including, but not limited to, barricades, fencing, signs, overhead protection for walkways. covers for holes, provision of safety equipment and other measured.

Where you are planning to carry out any work of this nature, it is important that you tell your Insurance Company well in advance of the proposed commencement date so that all issues in relation to insuring the risk can be appropriately addressed.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

In 2003 the National Educational Psychological Service produced a resource pack to help school staff in responding to unexpected and traumatic events. A second edition of this publication issued in 2007. 'Responding to Critical Incidents': 'Guidelines for Schools' and the accompanying 'Responding to Critical Incidents: Resource Materials for Schools' is now available on www.cpsma.ie. The advice and information contained in these publications is based on research in the area of critical incidents and is further enriched by the experience of psychologists and schools with experience of this difficult work.

Such incidents include suicide or suspected suicide, death due to violence, accidental death including road traffic accidents and drowning, and death through illness of members of the school community.

The key to managing critical incidents is forward planning. Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools outlines how schools can plan for crises and also considers preventive approaches that schools can adopt in creating a safe and supportive environment. In times of tragedy, young people need support from the adults who know them best. The publication provides practical step-by-step guidelines for teachers and Principals on how to respond when a tragedy occurs. It offers support to schools at a potentially overwhelming time.

ACCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS

If an accident occurs the following procedure may be of assistance:

1. Assess the type of injury.
2. Contact the appropriate medical services for assistance.
3. Make sure a list of the relevant phone numbers is held in the most accessible point for ease of access in case of emergency.
4. Make sure the contact details for staff, parents, guardians are available and easily accessible.
5. Keep a written record of the accident in the relevant report form/s recording the necessary details as outlined on the form/s e.g. Circumstances, activity being undertaken at the time, cause, equipment being used and service record if accident is related to use of equipment, injuries sustained, witnesses, place, time, witnesses and contact details, the injured party – name, address, age, nature of injury, first aid/treatment received and from whom etc, emergency services contacted and involved at the scene, name of person notifying accident time and date etc.
6. Take a photograph of the location/ equipment etc.
7. Notify Insurer.
8. Notify Chairperson and Board of Management.
9. Notify Health and Safety Authority [HSA], if appropriate – e.g. circumstances in which employee's {student's injury related to a work related activity} necessitates absence from work of more than 3 calendar days (including Saturdays and

Sundays) but excluding the day of the accident; circumstances of injury, which does not occur while a person is at work but is related to a work place activity, which requires treatment by a registered medical practitioner. If accident involves equipment remove that from service and preserve for inspection.

10. Consider action to prevent a recurrence.
11. Contact/report to the relevant relative, parent guardian as appropriate and necessary.
12. Keep such records for a period of 10 years.

ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

The following particulars of ALL accidents must immediately be reported to the Chairperson of the Board of Management

The Insurance Company issues its own Report Form.

It is useful to have copies of the Form available to the principal teacher of the school.

REPORTING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY (HSA)

Accidents can be reported to the Health and Safety Authority in two ways;

1. by hard copy, i.e. completing the Incident Report Form (IR1) and posting it to the Workplace Contact Unit, Health and Safety Authority, The Metropolitan Building, James Joyce Street, Dublin 1, or
2. by reporting online, via the Health and Safety Authority's website.

The Authority only accepts the pre-printed official IR 1 forms published by the Authority, photocopies are not acceptable.

Copies of the IR1 form are available by telephoning 1890 289 389 or if calling from outside of the Republic of Ireland +353 1 6147000

Sample Accident Report Form

Query	Reply
Place where accident occurred:	
Date and time of accident:	
State cause of accident [if known]:	
Give detailed account of accident stating as fully as possible the nature and result:	
Did the injured person cease class/work?	
Name and address of person injured:	
Name and address of witness of accident:	
Signature of person in charge at time when accident occurred:	
Signature of principal teacher:	
Date	

SECTION 7

The Inspectorate

Overview

This section deals with the following issues:

- The Inspectorate
- Models of evaluation
- Whole School Evaluation (WSE)
- Pre-evaluation meeting with the Board of Management
- Agenda for initial meeting with the Board of Management and Patron
- Pre-evaluation meeting with parents
- Agenda for meeting with the parents' association
- Pre-evaluation meeting with teaching staff
- The in-school evaluation phase
- The post-evaluation phase
- Post-evaluation meeting with school staff
- Agenda for the post-evaluation meeting with the Board of Management and Patron
- The WSE report
- Thematic evaluations
- Incidental inspections
- Evaluating and reporting on the work of probationary Teachers
- The publication process
- Factual verification
- School response
- Review of inspections
- Publication of report
- Implementation of recommendations in evaluation reports
- Section 24 procedures

[Article submitted by DES Inspectorate]

THE INSPECTORATE

Guidelines for Boards of Management in the primary sector

The Inspectorate is charged with evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the organisation and operation of primary and post-primary schools, including the quality of the teaching in those schools and the effectiveness of individual teachers.¹⁸ In addition to evaluating and reporting on the education standards in schools, the Inspectorate has an advisory and support role vis-à-vis the education provided.¹⁹ *The Education Act 1998* gives to an Inspector “all such powers as are necessary or expedient for the purpose of performing his or her functions”.

The Inspectorate is committed to evaluating schools and teachers in a spirit of professional collaboration and in accordance with the highest professional standards. The *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluating and Reporting for the Inspectorate* (2002)²⁰ sets out general principles and guidelines according to which the Inspectorate evaluates and reports on the work of schools. Schools, including the teachers, principal and board, are required to facilitate the work of Inspectors by affording them “every reasonable facility and co-operation”.²¹

¹⁸ *Education Act 1998*, s. 13(3)(a)(i)(I)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, s. 13(3)(a)

²⁰ *Revised in 2010*

²¹ *Ibid.*, s. 13(7)

The Inspectorate employs a range of external inspection models to evaluate the work of primary schools and teachers. These include whole-school evaluation (WSE), thematic evaluations, incidental inspections, and inspection of probationary teachers. These forms of inspection, described in detail in the next section, have been devised in consultation with the education partners, including the CPMSA. They are intended to complement the internal self-evaluation processes of schools. School self-evaluation is a collaborative, reflective process of internal school review whereby the principal and teachers in consultation with the Board of Management, parents and pupils, engage in reflective enquiry into the work of the school. The Inspectorate is currently developing guidelines to assist schools in school self-evaluation.

MODELS OF EVALUATION

WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION (WSE)

Whole-school evaluation is a process of external evaluation of the work of a school carried out by the Inspectorate, in order to promote school improvement. The WSE process provides a very comprehensive evaluation of the schools inspected. It involves examining the following aspects of school life:

- The quality of school management
- The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
- The quality of support for pupils

The WSE process is a collaborative one involving the inspectors on the evaluation team interacting with the board, the principal and teaching staff, officers of the parents' association, and pupils.

Meetings are held with the board, the teaching staff, parents' representatives and members of the students' council, where one exists. Questionnaires on aspects of the work of the school are administered to parents and pupils. Teaching and learning in classrooms and other learning settings in the school are observed. These sources of information provide inspectors with the evidence upon which their evaluative judgements about the work of the school are based.

The WSE process has three phases:

- The pre-evaluation phase
- The in-school evaluation phase
- The post-evaluation phase

The pre-evaluation phase:

1. Notification of the WSE is sent to the chairperson of the board, the principal and patron/trustees by letter five weeks in advance of the evaluation
2. The principal completes a school information form
3. The inspector leading the evaluation (referred to as the reporting inspector) schedules and conducts pre-evaluation meetings with:
 - (a) the Board of Management (including a representative of the patron/trustee(s) if requested by the patron/trustee(s))
 - (b) up to three representatives of the parents' association where the association is affiliated to the National Parents Council Primary (NPCP) or
 - (c) the parents' representatives on the Board of Management where the parents association is not affiliated to the NPCP
 - (d) the teaching staff.

PRE-EVALUATION MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

At the pre-evaluation meeting with the board (and patron's/trustees' representative if attending):

- The WSE process is outlined
- The context of the school is considered
- The procedures and operation of the board and the board's work in the school are discussed
- The board's views on aspects of the work of the school are sought
- The board may raise and discuss issues related to the WSE
- The reporting inspector seeks confirmation that the Board of Management has formally adopted the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Notes taken by the inspector(s) at this pre-evaluation meeting with the board form part of the record of evidence for the WSE and inform the WSE report.

AGENDA FOR INITIAL MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND PATRON

- Welcome
- Discussion of the following whole-school matters:
 - The context of the school
 - The strengths and areas for school development identified by the board

- The involvement of the board in supporting the work of the school including the board's involvement in and views regarding
 - Management of the school
 - School planning and self-evaluation
 - Teaching, learning and pupil achievement
 - Support for pupils
- The implementation of child protection procedures in the school
- Matters agreed for discussion
- Close

PRE-EVALUATION MEETING WITH PARENTS

If affiliated to the NPCP, the parents' association may nominate up to three of its members to meet with the inspector(s) conducting the evaluation. Where the parents' association is not so affiliated, the inspectors meet instead with the parents' nominees on the Board of Management. At the meeting with parents, discussion of the following takes place:

- The work of the parents' association
- The parents' perspectives on the work of the school
- The parents' involvement in the life of the school

The work of individual teachers is not discussed at this meeting. A record of the meeting is made available to the board and any issues raised by the parents' nominees that are pertinent to the day-to-day running of the school are referred to the principal or board for comment.

AGENDA FOR MEETING WITH THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

- Welcome
- Discussion of the following whole-school matters:
 - The work of the parents' association
 - Parents' perspectives on the work of the school
 - Parents' involvement in the life of the school
 - Matters agreed for discussion
- Close

PRE-EVALUATION MEETING WITH TEACHING STAFF

At this meeting discussion of the following takes place:

- The WSE process
- The school context

THE IN-SCHOOL EVALUATION PHASE

This is the main phase of the WSE. During this phase, inspectors engage in the following evaluation activities:

- A review of school documentation including those associated with school planning and school self-evaluation processes, the school improvement plan, assessment records, curriculum plans and documents associated with particular curricular programmes
- Meetings and interviews with members of the in-school management team and with the support teachers for pupils with additional learning needs
- Observation of teaching and learning in a range of curriculum areas and subjects throughout the school
- Interaction with pupils in classrooms and other learning settings in the school
- Review of samples of pupils' work in notebooks, copybooks, folders, workbooks, portfolios, and displays of project work
- Collection of information on the views of parents and pupils through questionnaires
- Provision of feedback to individual teachers regarding their work

THE POST-EVALUATION PHASE

The inspectors analyse the information gathered during the pre-evaluation and in-school phases and prepare a WSE report containing the key findings and recommendations about the quality of education provision in the school. The report affirms positive aspects of the school's work and identifies, as appropriate, areas for development. The WSE report is particularly relevant to the school's own self-evaluation processes and future school improvement plans. The findings should inform future development and improvement in the work of the school. Prior to publication of the WSE report the key findings and recommendations are discussed at two separate post-evaluation meetings:

- A meeting to which school staff members are invited
- A meeting to which the board members, patron's representative and the chairperson of the parents' association are invited.

POST-EVALUATION MEETING WITH SCHOOL STAFF

The reporting inspector presents the main findings and recommendations of the WSE. Members of staff are encouraged to discuss the outcomes of the evaluation and to clarify any information with the inspector(s) conducting the evaluation.

POST-EVALUATION MEETING WITH THE BOARD MEMBERS, PATRON'S REPRESENTATIVE AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The reporting inspector invites the members of the board, the patron's representative, a representative of the parents' association (normally the chairperson) to meet with the inspectors to discuss the main findings of the evaluation. The agenda for the meeting is issued in advance to the chairperson. A record of the issues discussed at the pre-evaluation meeting with the parents is provided to the board.

AGENDA FOR THE POST-EVALUATION MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND PATRON

1. Welcome
2. Discussion of the main findings of the WSE under the following headings
 - The quality of school management
 - The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
 - The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
 - The quality of support for pupils

3. Record of the parents' association meeting
4. Summary comments
5. Close

THE WSE REPORT

The primary purpose of the WSE report is to present an evaluation of the quality of provision in the school as a whole. No person is named in the report. The report contains comment on the context of the school and presents findings with regard to each of the following:

1. Quality of school management (including the work of the board)
2. The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. The quality of support for pupils

Prior to publication of the report on the website of the Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie), the board and principal are provided with an electronic copy of the WSE report and are invited firstly to check the report for factual accuracy (the factual verification process), and subsequently to respond to it (the school response process). If the option of responding to the report is availed of, the school's response will be published with the WSE report. The factual verification and school response processes are discussed in Section 3 below.

THEMATIC EVALUATIONS

From time to time the Inspectorate may choose to evaluate a particular aspect of school provision or to focus on particular curricular programmes or services across a sample of

schools. These are called thematic evaluations. An overall report is prepared that sets out the main trends and recommendations for service improvement and policy development. An example of a thematic evaluation report is the Inspectorate's recently published, DEIS Primary Planning Report 2011: An Evaluation of Planning Processes in DEIS Primary Schools. Depending on the structure of these evaluations, the Board of Management may or may not be interviewed as part of the evaluation process. In the DEIS evaluations of 2011, the chairperson of the board is provided with an opportunity to attend the post-evaluation meeting with the staff during which the key findings and recommendations of the evaluation are discussed.

INCIDENTAL INSPECTIONS

Incidental inspections are unannounced inspections that an inspector carries out in a school for the purpose of evaluating the quality and effectiveness of aspects of the education provided in the school under the normal conditions of a regular school day. Most incidental inspections focus on aspects of teaching, learning, pupil achievement and supports for pupils. Incidental inspections take particular account of the quality of the education experienced by the learner. They are generally carried out by one inspector who visits a school for a full day without prior notification. Incidental inspections allow inspectors to:

- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of the work of schools
- Comment on the organisation and operation of schools
- Consult with and provide advice to teachers, principals and boards about the quality of the education provided in the school

- Support schools and teachers
- Collect data on the operation and effectiveness of schools for research or other purposes
- Assess the implementation of regulations made by the Minister
- Collect data on factors that can be used to identify schools where further inspection is required
- Monitor the progress made by a school in implementing the recommendations of earlier inspections.

The incidental inspection process is flexible and an inspector may evaluate any aspect of the school's work deemed relevant. The implementation of aspects of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2011 is also monitored. During the incidental inspection, the inspector discusses the educational provision in the school with the school principal and evaluates the work of teachers. Visits to classrooms normally last about 1.5 hours. The focus of the visits is on evaluating the quality of learning and teaching. The visits involve:

- (a) Discussion with the class teacher
- (b) Observation of teaching and learning
- (c) Interaction with pupils
- (d) Review of the teacher's planning and other documentation
- (e) Feedback to the teacher

An oral report on the key findings of the incidental inspection is provided to the principal at the end of the school day during which the inspection was conducted. This is in addition to the oral feedback provided to each class teacher in the class settings inspected.

The focus of the advice and/or recommendations provided by the inspector is usually on aspects for development that will improve the quality of the pupils' learning. Inspectors are also available to discuss the key findings of an incidental inspection with the chairperson of the board. Incidental inspections do not, as a matter of course, result in a written report for the school. Incidental inspection findings may be used to inform composite, national reports on aspects of teaching and learning.

EVALUATING AND REPORTING ON THE WORK OF PROBATIONARY TEACHERS

The Teaching Council is the body with statutory responsibility for the registration of teachers in Ireland. In order to be registered, teachers must demonstrate their professional competence in a school setting. The Inspectorate currently evaluates and furnishes information to the Teaching Council on the professional competence of probationary teachers. To gather that information, an inspector inspects the work of a probationary teacher during two unannounced inspection visits. Such inspection visits may occur at any time during the school year and generally last about half a school day. During the inspection visits, the inspector evaluates the teacher's effectiveness in a classroom environment and in teaching curriculum areas and subjects as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum 1999 and provides advice and oral feedback to the teacher. The inspector's final judgement regarding the professional competence of the teacher is made at the end of the second visit. Where professional competence requirements are met, the Inspectorate provides the teacher with written confirmation of this fact. A written report is not furnished to the teacher following

the evaluation of his/her professional competence except in cases where professional competence requirements are not met. In such cases, the teacher is furnished with a written inspection report outlining the outcomes of the evaluation and recording advice for further development. The teacher must satisfy the Teaching Council as to his/her fulfilment of both service and professional competence requirements. When the Teaching Council is satisfied that both requirements are fully met, the Council will provide confirmation to the teacher regarding conditional or full registration as a teacher.

THE PUBLICATION PROCESS

In the case of inspection reports that are published on the Department of Education and Skills website, the following process applies. It should be noted that incidental inspection reports on the work of individual schools and reports on the work of individual teachers are not published.

FACTUAL VERIFICATION

The report is issued to the chairperson of the board and to the principal teacher for factual verification. This means that they are invited to draw the attention of the Inspectorate to any errors of fact in the inspection report, using a standard factual verification form. This must be done within ten school days. On receiving the inspection report, the chairperson of the board, or a person authorised by him/her, should provide a copy of the report to the following persons:

1. Every teacher affected by the inspection (for example, a copy of a WSE report should normally be supplied to each member of the

teaching staff, including teachers shared with other schools, and to the principal and deputy principal)

2. Every member of the Board of Management
3. The school's patron or trustees

It is open to the chairperson to supply a copy of the report to other members of the staff (For example, in special schools, a copy of the report may be provided to members of multi-disciplinary teams working in the school).

SCHOOL RESPONSE

The purpose of the school response is to allow the Board of Management to set out how it will use the report in the context of the school's on-going programme of self-evaluation, planning, and improvement. The board has three options in relation to school response:

1. The board may choose to accept the report without comment
2. The board may respond formally to the findings and recommendations of the report by using the pro-forma inspection report response form. The school response must be submitted to the Inspectorate by the chairperson of the board. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the school response will be published in its entirety, but without the signature of the chairperson, at the same time and in the same format as the school inspection report
3. The board may request a review of the inspection

REVIEW OF INSPECTIONS

Section 13(9) of the Education Act 1998 allows for a teacher or the board of a school to “request the Chief Inspector to review any inspection carried out by an Inspector which affects the teacher or the school”. Where such a request is made, the “Chief Inspector shall review the inspection in accordance with such procedures as the Chief Inspector shall determine.²²” If the Board of Management or a teacher or both the board and a teacher in the school seek a review of the inspection or the inspection report, the Inspectorate adheres to the Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under section 13 (9) of the Education Act, 1998. The inspection report will not be published until the review has been completed and, if appropriate, any recommendations arising from the review have been addressed.

PUBLICATION OF REPORT

On publication of the inspection report on the Department of Education and Skills web site (www.education.ie), an electronic copy of the inspection report and the school response is issued to the school patron or trustees, the chairperson of the board, the principal and the chairperson of the parents' association in the school.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN EVALUATION REPORTS

Responsibility for the implementation of recommendations and improvements rests mainly with the Board of Management and the

²² Section 13(9) Education Act 1998

principal of the school. The recommendations in evaluation reports can provide important direction to the Board of Management as it seeks to bring about on-going improvement in the school. The outcomes of external evaluation such as WSE should also help to inform and complement the outcomes of a school's self-evaluation.

In a very small number of instances, it may be necessary for the Department to engage with the patron, trustees or management of the school to ensure that the need for improvement and change is fully appreciated by the school and those responsible for its management. The engagement of the Department with the school authorities is managed through the Department's School Governance Section with the assistance of the Inspectorate.

SECTION 24 PROCEDURES

Procedures for the Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers under Section 24(3) of the Education Act 1998 were agreed with the education partners in autumn 2009. These procedures are designed to enable school boards to take appropriate steps to deal with significant teacher professional competence difficulties that may arise. As part of the Section 24 process, and following efforts by the school management to address difficulties, the board may ask the Chief Inspector to arrange an external review of the teacher's performance. The Inspectorate will respond to all such requests as a matter of priority and is committed to conducting its external inspections and reporting to Boards of Management speedily and effectively.

CPSMA – INFORMATION NOTE

The Inspectorate is introducing a new model of Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE – MLL). A similar model has been implemented successfully in post primary schools recently. This model is being piloted in a number of schools in April – June 2012 and following this trial phase, formal consultation will take place with the education partners re the implementation of this model at primary level.

The WSE – MLL allows for greater flexibility in evaluating educational provision across a variety of settings and enables school management and leadership to be evaluated taking cognisance of school context. It has a reduced requirement for supporting documentation and proposes a reduction in notice time to schools.

This new model brings particular focus to the quality of learning and teaching in schools, with the majority of the inspectors' time in schools spent in classrooms.

WSE - MLL provides that on-site time is reduced, with pre and post meetings, document review, lesson observations and feedback taking place within the designated inspection week. The whole process is planned to be complete typically within 4 - 5 days. The summary report – typically one to two pages in length, is issued quickly, thus improving the impact of evaluation on school improvement.

WSE – MLL is a proposed addition to the services provided by the Inspectorate and not a replacement to the current WSE model.

SECTION 8

Other Provisions

This section deals with the following issues:

Child Protection:

- Resources/essential reading
- The DES Child Protection Procedures
- Duties of Board of Management
- School's Child Protection Policy
- Allegations against school employees
- Guidance on record keeping

Special Education:

- Continuum of Support
- Special Education Circulars
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003
- Enrolment policy review
- Retention of pupils in same grade in primary schools
- Exemption from study of Irish
- The school year
- Copying licences for primary schools
- School transport

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE NOTE

This overview is a short summary of the resources which schools should have, the training available and the main provisions of the new child protection procedures from the perspective of the Board of Management.

RESOURCES/ESSENTIAL READING

- Children First-National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 issued by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary School 2011 issued by the Department of Education & Skills (DES Child Protection Procedures).
- Circular 63/2010 for the requirements in relation to vetting. Also refer to CPSMA's FAQ at page 113 regarding same.

Training

- A National Programme of training is available to all Boards of Management of primary schools and is funded by the DES. One of the modules is on child protection. The local diocesan education secretary [in most cases] is the convenor of this training.
- Training on the Stay Safe programme is provided for the whole school community (i.e. staff, parents and Boards of Management) through CAPP (The Child Abuse Prevention Programme). Normally CAPP writes to schools each year regarding the training that is available. CAPP intends to give priority to schools that have not availed of training in the last 5 years but will facilitate schools that request training. The contact details for CAPP are 01-6206347

or email staysafe@indigo.ie. CAPP is now part of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

THE DES CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The DES Child Protection Procedures replace the guidelines that issued in 2001. Schools are required to adhere to the **DES 2011 Child Protection Procedures** in dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse.

The purpose of the DES Child Protection Procedures is to:-

- give direction and guidance to schools in the implementation of Children First when dealing with allegations/suspicions of child abuse, and
- to provide information to school authorities and school personnel to enable them to be alert to and to be aware of what to do in situations where there is a concern, suspicion or allegation of child abuse or neglect.

The DES Child Protection Procedures emphasise that the most important consideration is the protection of children. The safety and well-being of children must be the priority. Child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and should be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should be shared only on a "need to know" basis in the interests of the child. The test is whether or not the person has any legitimate involvement or role in dealing with the issue. Records created by the DLP are highly confidential and must be filed by the

DLP in a secure filing system. See guidance below regarding record keeping.

The phrase "school personnel" is used in the DES Child Protection Procedures to encompass all adults who are involved in the operation of the school including employees and voluntary workers.

Strict confidentiality must be maintained. Any information or details that might identify a child should not be recorded in the minutes of Board of Management meetings.

In cases where school personnel have concerns about a child, but the DLP is not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the DLP shall seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Services and in consulting them, the DLP should be explicit that s/he is requesting advice/consultation and that s/he is not making a report. At this informal stage the DLP need not give identifying details. The DLP shall take a note of the date, the name of the HSE official and the advice given. If the HSE advises that a report should be made, the DLP shall act on that advice.

DUTIES OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The DES 2011 Child Protection Procedures require Boards of Management to:-

- Formally adopt and implement without modification the new "*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*" as part of their overall child protection policy
- Fully implement the *Stay Safe* programme which is mandatory
- Fully implement the *Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)* programme which is mandatory

- Use the standard template child protection policy which is in Appendix 1 of the DES Child Protection Procedures
- Name the DLP and deputy DLP in the school's child protection policy. The DLP is normally the principal
- The name of the DLP must be displayed in a prominent position near the main entrance to the school
- The school's child protection policy must be made available to all school personnel, the parents' association and readily accessible to parents on request
- At each Board of Management meeting:
 1. The principal's report shall state the number of reports made to the HSE by the DLP, since the last Board of Management meeting. The principal's report shall state only the number and not include any other details
 2. The principal's report shall also state the number of cases, since the last board meeting, where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made. The principal's report shall state only the number and not include any other details
 3. Where there were no such cases at 1 or 2 state this fact.
 4. The minutes of the Board of Management meeting shall record the above.
- An annual review of the school's child protection policy shall be conducted by the Board of Management
 - As part of the annual review the Board of Management must specifically review the school's implementation of the DES Child Protection Procedures. Appendix 2 of the

DES Child Protection Procedures contains a checklist that shall be used as an aid to conducting the annual review. The checklist is not intended as an exhaustive list

- The Board of Management shall put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review and arrange for these to be dealt with as quickly as possible
- The Board must have in place a protocol authorising immediate action when there is a requirement for a staff member to be put on administrative leave (see Appendix 6 of the DES Child Protection Procedures.)

SCHOOL'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Appendix 1 of the DES Child Protection Procedures contains a template child protection policy which schools must use.

The school's child protection policy must (as per the template)

- recognise that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities
- state that the Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the DES Child Protection Procedures as part of its overall child protection policy
- name the DLP
- name the deputy DLP
- confirm that in its policies, practices and activities, the Board of Management will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave them open to accusations of abuse or neglect
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
- List other school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection and state that the Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols and or practices are in place. Examples of policies include the code of behaviour/anti-bullying policy, pupil attendance strategy, supervision of pupils, policies relating to sporting activities/school outings etc.
- confirm that the policy has been made available to school personnel, the parents' association and is readily accessible to parents on request
- confirm that the policy will be made available if requested to the Department and the patron
- state that the policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year

- insert the date that the policy was adopted on
- the chairperson must sign and date the policy
- the principal must sign and date the policy
- insert date of next review.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Please refer to chapter 5 of the DES Child Protection Procedures.

Legal advice should always be sought in these cases.

Strict confidentiality must be maintained.

The procedures provide for:-

- the reporting procedure in respect of the allegation/suspicion and
- the procedure for dealing with the employee.

In general the same person shall not have responsibility for dealing with the reporting issue and the employment issue. The DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the HSE and the chairperson is responsible for addressing the employment issues. However, where the allegation/suspicion relates to the DLP, the chairperson shall assume the responsibility for seeking advice from and/or for reporting the matter to the HSE, as appropriate.

The Board must have in place a written protocol for authorising immediate action when there is a requirement for a staff member to be put on administrative leave (Appendix 6 of the DES Child Protection Procedures).

GUIDANCE ON RECORD KEEPING

All records relating to specific child protection issues (in other words records that involve specific individuals as distinct from general information) must be stored in a secure filing system. All documents filed in the secure filing system should be given coded reference and an index of all references should be securely maintained within the system.

Only those persons who need to have access to these records because of their role in relation to child protection should have access to this system i.e. the DLP and in his/her absence, the deputy DLP. No other member of staff should have access to this secure filing system or the records in it.

While the control of and access to these records is confined to the DLP and deputy DLP (where applicable), the chairperson of the Board of Management may need to access or store documents in the secure filing system when addressing employment related matters that involve a child protection dimension.

Any records/documentation regarding specific child protection issues should contain unique identifier references and be filed by the DLP in the secure filing system.

Where an issue arises regarding an employee, all records/documentation should contain unique identifier references and be filed by the DLP in the secure filing system. The minutes of the specially convened meeting of the Board should be recorded using initials, uniquely referenced, circulated only at the next meeting but not sent out. The minutes should be collected at the meeting and kept securely in the secure filing system. There should be no reference to this matter in the agreed report.

Boards of Management should note that web based guidance with template policies, guidance notes and issues pertaining to schools from a data protection perspective will issue shortly. See www.cpsma.ie for updates

CHILD PROTECTION – RELEVANT CIRCULARS/GUIDANCE NOTES

DES Circular 65/2011:

available at www.cpsma.ie - Child Protection Section.

Children First:

available at www.cpsma.ie - Child Protection Section.

2011 Child Protection Procedures:

available at www.cpsma.ie - Child Protection Section.

Vetting – DES Circular 63/2010

available at www.cpsma.ie - Child Protection Section.

Teaching Council Guidelines of assessing Court Convictions:

available at www.cpsma.ie - Child Protection Section.

Garda Vetting

refer to FAQ on pages 113.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The State's responsibility for special education in Ireland is clarified under legislation, including The Education Act 1998, The National Disabilities Authority Act, 1999, The Education Welfare Act, 2000, The Equal Status Act, 2000, The Employment Equality Act and the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 and Disability Act 2005. The Education Act 1998 requires the Minister of Education to provide funding for each recognised school/centre for education and to provide support services for students including those who have a disability or special educational needs (SEN). The Act requires that schools meet the educational needs of all students, including those with disability or other special educational needs. Specific mention is given in almost all sectors of the Act to the inclusion of pupils with SEN.²³

The provision of education falls within the remit of schools, supported by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), via the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO). Children with special educational needs are regarded as having either high incidence special educational needs (more frequently occurring special educational needs) or low incidence special educational needs (more specific/more demanding special educational needs). The needs of children with high incidence SEN are met from the resources allocated to the school under the General Allocation Model, (Circular 07/2012) and are usually met by the learning support teacher in the school. From Sept. 2012 the allocation will be based on 0.2 of a post (5 hours) for every mainstream classroom teaching post in mixed or all boys schools and 0.16 of a post (4 hours)

for every mainstream classroom teaching post in all girls schools (rounded to the nearest 0.2 of a post to facilitate clustering into full time posts).

Specific resources are allocated to the school to assist in meeting the needs of pupils with diagnosed low incidence SEN. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is a service of the Department of Education and Science. Each psychologist is assigned to a group of schools. They offer a range of services aimed at meeting these needs, including assessment. Pupils with low incidence SEN require a diagnosis, by psychologist, psychiatrist or other appropriate professional, in order that their needs can be identified and appropriate supports put in place. Additionally, where a child has significant care needs or is deemed to be a danger to himself/herself or others, the school may apply to the NCSE via the SENO for a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) for that pupil. There are also available more specific resources, e.g. computers/laptops, specific furniture and occupational therapy equipment, which can be applied for via the SENO to the NCSE. Heretofore, schools could also apply for specific additional teaching hours to meet the needs of pupils who did not have English as a first language. However, recent changes announced in Budget 2012 have deemed that the needs of these pupils be met under the General Allocation Model. There are some exceptions to this; - in areas of high numbers of pupils who do not have English as a first language.

The provision of education to pupils with special educational needs and its implementation in schools is directed by circulars issued by the DES and is being

²³ Boards should note that the Education (Amendment) Bill 2012 proposes a number of changes in the areas of special education. See www.cpsma.ie for updates.

constantly updated. Therefore, reference to recent DES circulars is essential.

Currently the Circulars relevant to Special Education are listed on page 192 of this publication.

In planning to meet the special educational needs of pupils, schools should plan in a manner consistent with the size of the school, the learning profile of the pupils with special educational need and the expertise of the school staff. As stated in Circular 24/03, the over-riding principle is that resources should be deployed in individual schools in the manner that best meets the needs of the pupils with special educational needs in that school. Additionally, the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for pupils with special educational needs, involving consultation with parents, teachers, principal, possible relevant external professionals and, where appropriate, the pupil, is essential in planning for the appropriate education of pupils with special educational needs. Guidelines for developing an IEP are available to download on the NCSE website at www.ncse.ie/publications/policy.asp.

Boards of Management are obliged to recruit and employ fully recognised and probated primary teachers for any vacancies arising for Learning Support/General Allocation Model posts.

In relation to Resource Teacher (RT) (low-incidence) posts, the following teachers can be appointed:

- fully recognised and probated primary teachers; or
- teachers who hold provisional or restricted recognition from the Department of Education and Skills.

Budget 2011 has outlined some changes to Resource Teacher Posts. Existing posts will be used to create a network of 2,450 full time permanent resource posts in over 1,600 base schools to be identified by DES. The list was published in DES Circular 07/2012. The teachers in these schools will work NCSE approved resource hours for pupils with low incidence special needs in the base schools and in neighbouring schools. The local SENO will have an oversight role regarding sharing arrangements between schools so that they can operate as efficiently as possible and time loss due to travel between schools can be kept to a minimum. Annual changes in resource hours at individual school level only affects where the teacher is working on any one day not whether the base school continues to host the full-time post. Schools that are unable to have NCSE approved resource hours met from the network will be allocated part time temporary posts.

In seeking to meet the needs of pupils with SEN additional resources are applied for via the SENO and the NCSE. The following forms are available to download from the NCSE website and cover the various application processes.

Application Forms for Primary Schools

refer to www.cpsma.ie – Special Education Section

Application for Access to Low Incidence Hours and SNA Support

refer to www.cpsma.ie –Special Education Section.

Application Form for School Transport

refer to www.cpsma.ie –Special Education Section.

Application Form for Assistive Technology

refer to www.cpsma.ie –Special Education Section.

School SNA Profile Form

refer to www.cpsma.ie –Special Education Section.

Pupils in receipt of resources currently enrolled who will not be in the school in September

refer to www.cpsma.ie –Special Education Section.

Disability Codes

refer to www.cpsma.ie –Special Education Section.

BCN1 form should be completed by the school where the primary reason for the SNA application relates to behavioural care needs

refer to www.cpsma.ie – Special Education Section.

Additional support is available to school via the Special Education Support Service in terms of advice, training, further education and workshops. www.sess.ie

CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) recognises that all children are unique and special educational needs can occur on a continuum from mild to severe and from transitory to enduring. Therefore, a graduated approach to identification and programme planning is recommended. This approach has formed the basis for the three-stage approach to assessment and intervention (“The Staged Approach”) described in the NEPS Model of Service leaflet and in the Department’s special education circulars (Circular 24/03 and 02/05). Psychologists in NEPS work to support schools in developing this approach to assessment and intervention. Currently, this staged approach has been expanded and reviewed to incorporate a continuum of support

in order to support the extensive diversity of pupils with special educational needs in schools. The continuum of support is outlined in DES publications which were issued to schools in 2007. These booklets include “*Special Educational Needs - A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers*”, “*Special Educational Needs - A Continuum of Support Resource Pack for Teachers*” and “*Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers*”. These guidelines present a continuum of assessment and intervention processes which acknowledges the central role of the class teacher supported as appropriate by the school’s special education personnel and by agencies external to the school. The term “continuum” has been used to reflect the fact that individual special educational needs may occur anywhere along a continuum. The level of intervention and support provided in school should, therefore, be matched to those needs and their changing nature over time.

The Guidelines have been designed to assist teachers in primary schools to identify needs and to develop and evaluate interventions to meet those needs. The accompanying Resource Pack is intended to provide practical advice and photocopiable templates for teachers to use or adapt for their own use in supporting pupils in their classroom and school. The Guidelines take account of international practice as well as of best practice in this country. They are intended to complement the Learning Support Guidelines (2000) and to be used in conjunction with the Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process (NCSE 2006).

The term exceptionally able is used to describe students who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students.

These students frequently also require additional support. The NCCA has issued draft guidelines for teacher (*'Exceptionally Able Students Draft Guidelines for Teachers'*, available on www.ncca.ie) to assist in the assessment, differentiation of education and support of pupils who are exceptionally able or gifted students. The aim of the guidelines is to raise awareness of the needs of exceptionally able students and support management and teachers to:

- audit and review school policy and practice
- differentiate the curriculum
- develop effective strategies
- further develop an inclusive school ethos
- provide models of good practice which support and nurture the development of exceptionally able students.

It should be noted that good practice for exceptionally able students is also good practice for all students and can improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Students who are classified as exceptionally able belong on a continuum of students with specific educational requirements. Many have the skills to adjust to their educational and social environment with relative ease, while others may manifest a range of emotional problems and adjustment issues.

In a school climate that celebrates individual differences, the school ethos will promote and support individual differentiation. The key processes that allow for individual development depend on the flexibility of the school organisation and the careful attention that is given to lesson planning, which systematically builds in appropriate challenges for all students. A system of education that caters for

the diversity of students' needs is founded on the belief that students first need enriching opportunities to discover their strengths and interests. Once identified, those strengths and interests can be nurtured and supported and potential can be developed into performance (NCCA, 2007).

CIRCULARS PERTAINING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Available at www.cpsma.ie –Special Education Section.

0007/2012

Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2012/13 school year

NCSE 01/12

Submission of Applications for Resources for the 2012/13 school year

0050/2011

Home Tuition Scheme 2011/2012

Application For Home Tuition for the 2011/2012 School Year

0042/2011

Staffing arrangements in special Schools

0037/2011

Revised Arrangements for the Provision of Resource Teaching Supports for the 2011/2012 school year

0030/2011

Arrangements for the 2011/2012 School Year in Relation to Learning Support/Resource Teacher (LS/RT) and Resource Teacher (RT) Posts - Full and Part-Time Posts

0020/2011

The Assessment of Needs process under the Disability Act 2005

0017/2011

Revised Arrangements for the Provision of Teaching Supports to Traveller Students

NCSE 03/11

Summary of Guidelines for 2011/2012 (Special Schools)

NCSE 01/11

Summary of Guidelines for 2011/2012 (Primary Schools)

0050/2010

Home Tuition Scheme 2010/2011

03/2010 (NCSE)

Guidelines for Principals of Special Schools in relation to the allocation of Teaching and SNA Resources for the 2010/11 Academic Year

0038/2010

Staffing arrangements and the role of the National Council for Special Education

0048/2008

Arrangements for the 2008/2009 School Year in Relation to LS/RT posts and RT Posts

0077/2007

Home Tuition Scheme - Primary

0051/2007

Update on Implementation of EPSEN Act (2004) and Disability Act (2005)

0038/2007

Criteria for Enrolment in Special Classes for Pupils with Specific Speech and Language Disorder in National Schools

0034/2007

Learning Support/Resource Teacher (LS/RT) posts and Resource Teacher (RT) posts for 2007-08

0036/2006

SEN - Arrangements for the 2006/2007 School Year in Relation to the General Allocation and Certain Other Matters.

01/05

02/05

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools

13/04

Allocation of Teaching and Special Needs Assistant Resources for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

09/04

Allocation of Resources for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in National Schools

08/03

07/02

08/02

Applications for Resource Teachers and Special Needs Assistants

Applications for Full-time or Part-time Special Needs Assistant Support to Address the Special Care Needs of Children with Disabilities

Applications for Full-time or Part-time Resource Teacher Support to Address the Special Education Needs of Children with Disabilities

DES

An Evaluation of Educational Provision for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

DES

Learning Support Guidelines

DES

An Evaluation of Special Classes for Pupils with Specific Speech and Language Disorder

DATA PROTECTION ACTS 1988 AND 2003

Boards of Management should note that web based guidance with template policies, guidance notes and issues pertaining to schools from a data protection perspective will issue shortly. See www.cpsma.ie for updates.

Advisory Notice for Schools of Obligations under the Acts

1. Purpose of this Document

This document is being issued to ensure that school managers are aware of the requirements of Data Protection Legislation. It does not purport to be a definitive interpretation of the law, and is issued for advisory purposes only.

A Guide for Data Controllers', a publication of the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, contains further details on the contents of this circular. Any further information which you may require is available from the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (see Paragraph 5, below).

It is important to note that a new Data Protection Act (The Data Protection Amendment Act 2003) came into effect on 1 July 2003. The Act brought manual records into the scope of the legislation and strengthened the rights of Data Subjects. A brief outline of Data Protection legislative requirements is given below.

2. Purpose of the Data Protection Acts

2.1 Data Protection Acts are designed to protect the rights of individuals with regard to personal data, i.e. data relating to them which are held on computer files or which are retained in manual files which are structured or searchable by reference to individuals. The law defines personal data

as 'data relating to a living individual who is or can be identified from the data or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, possession of the data controller'.

- 2.2 Every person who holds personal data (manual or otherwise) is bound by the provisions of the Data Protection Acts.
- 2.3 If you hold data of a sensitive nature on your computer, you are obliged to register with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.

NB. Any school which holds sensitive personal information e.g. information regarding racial/ethnic origin (including membership of the travelling community) information re. religious or other beliefs, political opinions or physical or mental health (other than data kept for the purposes of normal personnel administration) on any person, including pupils, staff or parents, on a computer file, should register in accordance with the Acts. It is likely, therefore, that many schools will need to arrange for registration. A registration form and guidance notes are attached. Any queries on this matter should be referred to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (see contact details in paragraph 5, below).

3. Rights of Data Subjects

- 3.1 The Data Protection Acts allow Data Subjects (persons whose personal data are retained on a file):
 - (a) to establish the existence of personal data relating to them,
 - (b) to have access to, and be given copies of the data – with limited exceptions,
 - (c) to have inaccurate data rectified or erased.

- 3.2 The new Act includes a provision giving the Data Subject the right to be told the source of the data (where known).

4. Obligations of Data Controllers

- 4.1 The Data Protection Acts impose a number of obligations on persons or organisations who hold personal data, including the following:

- (a) the data must be obtained and processed fairly;
- (b) the data must be accurate, and where necessary kept up-to-date;
- (c) the data must be kept for specified and lawful purposes only;
- (d) the data must not be disclosed or used in any manner incompatible with the specified purposes;
- (e) the data must be adequate, relevant, and not excessive in relation to the specified purposes;
- (f) the data must not be kept for any longer than is necessary for the specified purposes;
- (g) the data must be protected by appropriate security measures against unauthorised access /alteration /disclosure /destruction.

In addition, the new Act introduces the concept of 'explicit consent' being required from data subjects to enable sensitive personal data to be processed. However, this is only one of a number of conditions in the Act under which sensitive personal data can be processed. Sensitive personal data may also be obtained, processed and disclosed by a school where the principal is required to do so under the enactment, e.g. the Education Welfare Act 2000. Where the provisions of such an

enactment apply, therefore, the consent of the data subject is not required.

It is advisable for schools to have a written Data Protection Policy in place which sets out the types of personal data they collect, their purpose/s for collecting the data and the persons or bodies to which they are likely to disclose it. Data subjects should be made aware of the Policy, and, in the case of data pertaining to the student and/or the student's parent/guardian, the process of making them aware of the Policy should commence, ideally, in the context of the enrolment process.

5. Registration and Further Information

Where a school retains personal information as outlined in Paragraph 2 above, arrangements should be made for registration of the school, if this has not already been done. In this connection, a Registration Form and guidance notes are attached. The form (with appropriate remittance) should be submitted to:

The Office of the Data Commissioner
Block 6, Irish Life Centre, Lr Abbey
Street, Dublin 1.

Tel 01 874 8544/Fax 01 874 5405

Email info@dataprotection.ie

The Data Protection Office should be contacted re. any queries on the legislation or its application, and for any advice regarding the completion of the registration form. The booklet 'A Guide for Data Controllers' is also enclosed for your information; more information is available on the Data Protection Commissioner's website at www.dataprotection.ie.

There is a useful self-assessment checklist regarding compliance with the legislation at www.dataprotection.ie/3k.htm.

ENROLMENT POLICY REVIEW

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

In light of recent decisions of the Supreme Court,²⁵ High Court²⁶ and the Equality Tribunal,²⁷ Boards of Management are advised to review their enrolment policies. The following template may be used by a BoM to assist with this review.

Questions	Y/N	If Not...
Does the BoM have an Enrolment/Admissions policy in place?		<p>Section 15(2) (d) Education Act, 1998 provides that a Board shall <i>publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school...</i></p> <p>If there are a number of Catholic schools within a parish boundary, a common enrolment policy (subject to the approval of the patron) may be drawn up among those Catholic schools to ensure that applicant children get priority in the nearest or local school.</p>

Does the policy document include/refer to...?			
A	Title of the Policy		State [Name of School] 'Enrolment Policy'
B	Introductory Statement		State how the policy was formed and who was involved.
C	Mission Statement		Clearly state the link between this policy, other relevant school policies and the Catholic ethos of the school. An educational establishment does not discriminate if it admits children of one particular religious denomination in preference to others, or if it refuses to admit a child who is not of that denomination, provided any such refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. ²⁸
D	Rationale		State why it is necessary to devise such a policy.

²⁴ It should be noted that the DES has commenced initial preparatory work for developing a regulatory framework for enrolment.

²⁵ Board of Management of St. Molaga's National School –v- The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and Others [Appeal No: 234/2009] partially heard

²⁶ Lucan Educate Together v The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science & Others [2008] No.287 JR.

²⁷ Stokes v Christian Brothers High School Clonmel DEC-S210-056 (subject to appeal)

²⁸ Section 7(3)(c) Equal Status Act, 2000

Does the policy document include/refer to...?			
E	Aims		State ideally what the school seeks to achieve by having the policy in place.
F	General Information Section²⁹		<p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, address and contact details of school • Denomination/Name of patron • Type of school e.g. co-educational, single sex, ethos, etc. • Number of teachers & range of classes taught • Curriculum offered • Funding e.g. Oireachtas funding and DES grant assistance
G	Application Procedure General Points to note		<p>Clearly state how, when and by what means a parent/guardian should apply for enrolment e.g. application form.</p> <p>(a) PPS numbers should not be requested at the time of application unless a specific request for resources is being made to the NCSE³⁰ at that time. Any such general request at enrolment is contrary to current Data Protection legislation.</p> <p>(b) Schools may... as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.³¹</p> <p>(c) Admission of Junior Infants normally takes place on the first day of the academic year. Any child who has not reached his/her fourth birthday cannot be enrolled at any time.³²</p>

²⁹ See cpsma.ie/school_policies/enrolment for further information

³⁰ National Council for Special Education

³¹ Section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

³² Rule 64 of the Rules for National Schools & DES Primary Circular 24/2002

Does the policy document include/refer to...?			
G	Application Procedure General Points to note (cont.)		<p>(d) The BoM of a school must make a decision³³ in respect of an application within 21 days of receipt of such application. Where a school reasonably requires further information, the policy should state that the application will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information, has been received. Schools should therefore clearly state what information and documentation is required.³⁴</p> <p>(e) The Board may wish to specify that Junior Infants must be four years old by/on a certain date e.g. where the number of applications in any given year exceeds the availability of places. In the case of pupils applying for enrolment in other streams, the BoM should provide for enrolment at any time. Boards should exercise caution when taking applications throughout the year and are reminded of the requirement to give a decision to the applicant parent/guardian within 21 days of the application being made.³⁵</p>
H	Decision Making Process		The policy should clearly state that decisions will be given in writing within 21 days of receiving a complete application. ³⁶
I	Enrolment Criteria		<p>In regard to criteria for enrolment, the priority order in which children will be accepted, in situations where schools may be oversubscribed, should be clearly stated.</p> <p>Suggested Criteria (adapt to suit circumstances):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children from [Name of other school]: This covers schools whose intake comes primarily from an infant, junior or other school • Sisters and/or brothers of pupils currently in the school. This will depend on the type of school e.g. single sex schools • Catholic children living within the parish boundary

³³ Section 19(3) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

³⁴ Where applicable, requests in respect of guardianship, custody and access arrangements on behalf of parents should be supported by a written letter from a solicitor. See, CPSMA Newsletter/Issue 8. November 2010/Family Law Guidance Note.

³⁵ Section 19(3) Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

³⁶ Section 19(3) Education (Welfare) Act, 2000; [See cpsma.ie/school_policies/enrolment/decision_making for further information on the process to be followed by the BoM]

Does the policy document include/refer to...?			
I	Enrolment Criteria (cont.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic children living outside the parish boundary who do not have a Catholic school within their own parish boundary • Other children living within the parish boundary • Other children living outside the parish boundary • Children of current staff, including ancillary staff. <p>In the event that there are more applicants within any category than there are available places, priority will be given to children within the particular category in order of age, starting with the oldest.</p> <p>Schools should ensure that criteria used do not directly or indirectly discriminate against an individual applicant or any group of applicants.³⁷</p>
J	Enrolment of Children with Special Needs		<p>Mainstream Schools (General)</p> <p>As a general principle, enrolment of children with a disability or special educational needs cannot be deferred or postponed until additional resources have been approved or allocated by the DES or SENO.³⁸ All relevant information and reports should be requested to support the application, thereby enabling the BoM to make a prompt and informed decision.³⁹ The decision taken should always be in accordance with the agreed enrolment policy.</p> <p>Mainstream Schools with Special Classes and Units</p> <p>Schools with special classes and units for children with Special Educational Needs [SEN] should provide clear guidance to applicant parents/guardians on how places in these classes are allocated e.g.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Priority will be given to children currently enrolled in mainstream classes in the school with a professional report recommending placement (2) Children currently enrolled in special pre-schools attached to the school will be given priority over external applicants. The status of such pre-schools should be clearly established and stated e.g. private or State sponsored.

³⁷ Section 3(2) Equal Status Acts, 2000-2008. See also CPSMA Newsletter/Issue 2 November 2009/Equal Status Acts 2000-2004, Note.; Stokes v Christian Brothers High School Clonmel DEC-S210-056 (subject to appeal)

³⁸ Special Education Needs Organiser.

³⁹ See cpsma.ie/school_policies/enrolment/Enrolment of Children with special Needs p.4 and EPSEN Act note p.12

Does the policy document include/refer to...?			
J	Enrolment of Children with Special Needs (cont.)		<p>(3) Other children with special needs who do not fall into either category 1 or 2 above.</p> <p>In categories (1) & (2) these students may already be registered students of the school.</p> <p>As a priority, the policy should detail the range of disabilities and services catered for in the special classes and/or units. In this regard, the school needs to be very clear to whom, by whom and to what level, non-educational services can be provided.</p> <p>In certain cases the DES is prescriptive as to entry criteria for some classes and units and these should be stated accordingly.</p> <p>Special Schools</p> <p>Special schools should state clearly the categories of SEN⁴⁰ they cater for and the specific requirements for entry to the school i.e. the need for an applicant child to have a professional report confirming the diagnosed SEN and recommending placement in a special school.⁴¹ It should be noted that enrolment practices and resource allocations in special schools are currently under review by the DES/NCSE.⁴²</p>
K	Refusal to enrol on grounds of 'Exceptional Circumstances'		<p>A BoM can only refuse to enrol in compliance with its agreed policy. The BoM can reserve in its enrolment policy the right to refuse enrolment in exceptional circumstances e.g.</p> <p>The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education or</p> <p>(i) In the opinion of the BoM, the pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.</p> <p>Boards should only seek to rely on this clause in rare and exceptional circumstances. Schools should be aware of the right of a parent/guardian to appeal the decision of the BoM.</p>

⁴⁰ Special Educational Needs⁴¹ DES Circular 38/2010⁴² National Council for Special Education

Does the policy document include/refer to...?			
L	Right of Appeal		<p>Section 29 of the Education Act 1998⁴³ provides for a right of appeal against a decision to refuse enrolment.⁴⁴ The policy should state how, when and by whom parents/guardians are informed of their right to appeal a decision of the BoM in relation to a refusal to enrol. It should also state who has responsibility for preparing a response for the Appeals Committee if and when an appeal is initiated. Following a decision of the Supreme Court,⁴⁵ Boards should note that, in an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, an Appeals Committee can substitute its decision for that of the BoM and may make such recommendations to the Secretary General of the DES as it considers appropriate.⁴⁶</p>
M	Pupil Transfer		<p>Pupils may transfer to the school at any time subject to the school's enrolment policy and available space. BoM should be aware that the enrolment, which determines the teaching allocation of a school each year, is determined by the enrolment as of 30th September in the previous school year.</p> <p>Schools should note that the legal obligation to share information in relation to attendance and educational progress has effect only when the child has been put on the register of the second school and not before.⁴⁷ Any sharing of information prior to registration could be in breach of Data Protection legislation.⁴⁸</p>
N	Code of Behaviour		<p>A school should append to its enrolment policy, a copy of its Code of Behaviour and any other policy referred to in its enrolment policy. Section 15(2) (d) of the Education Act, 1998 provides that the enrolment policy should outline the policy in relation to suspension and expulsion in accordance with NEWB Guidelines.⁴⁹</p>

⁴³ as amended by section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007

⁴⁴ The procedure is set out on the DES website 'www.education.ie' and in DES Circular 22/2002

⁴⁵ Board of Management of St. Molaga's National School –v- The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and Others [Appeal No: 234/2009 partially heard;

⁴⁶ Lucan Educate Together v The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science & Others [2008] No.287 JR. Judge O'Keeffe stated that the appeal committee "cannot strike down or disregard a provision in the enrolment policy of the school and substitute what it may consider as appropriate."

⁴⁷ Section 20(5) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

⁴⁸ Further information pertaining to valid enrolment and transfer of pupils between schools is available in DES Circular 24/2002

⁴⁹ NEWB 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools(2008)

Does the policy document include/refer to...?			
O	Review		The policy document should note when, how and by whom the policy will be monitored and reviewed.
P	Approval of Patron		Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998 requires a Board of Management to publish, in such manner as the Board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with.
Q	Ratification		On receipt of approval from the patron, the revised policy should be approved at a meeting of the BoM, signed by the Chairperson, dated and retained with the minutes of the particular meeting.
R	Communication/ Circulation of Policy		Revised copies/updates should be made available on-line and/or issued in hard copy on request to parents/guardians. New applicants to the school should be given a hard copy of the enrolment policy.

RETENTION OF PUPILS IN SAME GRADE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Circular 32/2003 [Circular reproduced here]

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This circular amends Primary Circular 11/01 regarding the regulations governing the retention of pupils in Primary Schools.

2. Current Policy on Retention

- 2.1 The primary school curriculum is designed as an eight-year course, including a two-year infant cycle followed by six years in standards from first to sixth, with children progressing to the next grade at the end of each school year. The primary curriculum is flexible and child-centred, and can be adapted to meet children's needs.
- 2.2 The Department is providing considerable support for pupils with learning difficulties in schools. Learning Support teachers, resource teachers, special needs assistants and a wide range of resources under the various schemes for schools in areas designated as disadvantaged are among the forms of provision allocated to schools for these pupils. The level of provision available should enable pupils to make progress in keeping with their needs and abilities and to move consecutively through the different class levels in the school along with their peers.
- 2.3 Under the Department's policy, children should only be allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. An additional grade level should not operate through the retention of all or a substantial number of pupils at a grade level.

- 2.4 In such exceptional circumstances a principal teacher, following consultation with the learning support teacher/resource teacher and class teacher and parent(s) may conclude that a pupil would benefit educationally by repeating a grade level. A record outlining the educational basis for the decision to retain a child should be kept for any pupil so retained. In addition, there should be a clear programme outlined for such a pupil that records precisely what new approach will be used for her/him and what its expected benefit will be. These records should be retained within the school and should be brought to the Inspector's attention by the principal when she/he visits the school. No pupil should repeat a grade more than once in a primary school.

- 2.5 In all cases where the proposed retention of pupils has staffing implications the Primary Payments Section of the Department of Education & Skills should be notified.

3 Transfer of Pupils to another primary school to Repeat Sixth Class

- 3.1 Pupils who have completed sixth class must not transfer to another primary school to repeat sixth class. In the event that a school were to enrol pupils from another school to repeat sixth class the pupils shall not be included as eligible pupils for staffing and other purposes. Capitation and other grants in respect of such pupils shall not be paid.

4. Elimination of Nine-Year Cycle

- 4.1 Since the issue of Primary Circular 11/01 in March 2001 a school must not operate a middle infants class or a repeat sixth

class/seventh class. In the event that a school continues the practice of enrolling pupils in a middle infant or a repeat class the Department will discount the pupils in such classes for the purpose of determining the valid enrolment of the school. Capitation and other grants in respect of such pupils shall not be paid.

This circular may also be accessed on the Department of Education & Skills website at www.education.ie.

EXEMPTION FROM STUDY OF IRISH

Procedures – DES Circular 12/1996 – available on www.cpsma.ie – Circulars.

THE SCHOOL YEAR

Time in school Circular 11/95 available on www.cpsma.ie & Circular 34/2011 – available on www.cpsma.ie – Circulars.

Standardised School Year 2011-2014 – available on www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – DES Circular 34/2011 – Appendix A sets out dates.

Making-up for time lost due to unforeseen circumstances– available on www.cpsma.ie – Circulars – DES Circular 34/2011 – Appendix B

COPYING LICENCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Boards should refer to www.cpsma.ie for the most up to date advice.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

[Article submitted by DES – School Transport Section]

The objective of school transport is:

- To support the transport to and from school of children who would have difficulty travelling, for reasons of distance, to their nearest school if transport is not supported;
- To support the transport to and from school of children who have special educational need where those needs necessitate assistance for them in travelling to and from school.

There are three school transport schemes namely:

- Primary School Transport Scheme
- Post Primary School Transport Scheme and
- School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs arising from a Diagnosed Disability (Refer to DES information update available at www.cpsma.ie/news archive 20/12/2011)

Detailed information on each of the three schemes is available on the Department's website at www.education.ie. The information provided outlines information for each scheme under the following headings:

- Purpose of the scheme
- Eligibility criteria
- Application process
- Level of service
- Charges
- Grants
- Concessionary Transport

-
- Appeals Board
 - General

School transport is operated by Bus Éireann on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. Bus Éireann is responsible for planning routes, employing bus drivers, collecting charges, ticketing, contracting services and ensuring compliance with regulations on matters such as safety and insurance. Queries relating to the operation of the school transport schemes should be directed to the local Bus Éireann offices.

School Transport information, including contact details for the local Bus Éireann offices, is also available on Bus Éireann website at www.buseireann.ie.

ABBREVIATIONS

B. Ed

Bachelor of Education

BOM

Board of Management

CAPP

Child Abuse Prevention Programme

CPSMA

Catholic Primary Schools Management Association

CSP

Catholic Schools Partnership

DEIS

Delivering Equality in Schools

DES

Department of Education and Skills

DLP

Designated Liaison Person

GAM

General Allocation Model

GCVU

Garda Central Vetting Unit

HSE

Health Service Executive

IMPACT

Irish Municipal Public and Civil Trade Union

ICT

Information and Communication Technology

IEC

Irish Episcopal Conference

IEP

Individual Education Plan

INTO

Irish National Teachers Organisation

IPPN

Irish Primary Principals' Network

LRC

Labour Relations Commission

MLL

Management, Leadership and Learning

NCCA

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NCSE

National Council for Special Education

NCTE

National Council for Technology in Education

NEPS

National Educational Psychological Service

NERA

National Employment Rights Authority

NEWB

National Educational Welfare Board

NPC-P

National Parents Council-Primary

NQT

Newly Qualified Teacher

OHS

Occupational Health Service

OLCS

On-Line Claims System

PDST

Professional Development Service for Teachers

PSD

Project Supervisor Design

PSC

Project Supervisor Construction

PTAF

Primary Teacher Appointment Form

R.E.

Religious Education

SEN

Special Educational Needs

SENO

Special Educational Needs Organiser

SESE

Social Environmental and Scientific Education

SNA

Special Needs Assistant

SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education

TCC

Teacher Conciliation Council

WSE

Whole School Evaluation

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