



# Newsletter

No. 78 June 2024

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*Bainigí an-taitneamh as an Samhradh. Beimid ar oscailt ar 01-6292462 agus [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie) i rith an tSamhraidh, más gá, ach tá súil againn go mbeidh laethanta saoire deasa agaibh go léir.*

## “Remembering”

### The Cuckoo

The Cuckoo comes in April,  
He sings his song in May,  
In the middle of June  
He whistles his tune  
In July he flies away!



### An t-Oide

*Le Séamas Ó hAodha*

Uasal ceird an oide,  
Mar rí ar imeall trá,  
Chuir ar tonn na soithigh  
'S sheol go hoscailt bá.  
Aoibhinn ceird an oide,  
Mar gharnóir lá lúil,  
D'aistrigh sciamh na scoithe  
Ó ghrianán go húir.  
Uaigneach ceird an oide,  
mar mháithrín léi féin,  
Tar éis imeacht a clainne  
Thar tairsigh I gcéin

### Graduations

Graduations are another type of remembering and many schools have ceremonies and prayer services to mark the final days of 6th Class. This [Graduation Liturgy](#) from the Dublin Archdiocese and in particular the Graduation Blessing may provide inspiration to members.



### Graduation blessing

God has given us the power  
To create beauty  
To make another smile  
To be a healing presence in  
someone's sorrow  
To bring justice to the oppressed  
To console people in difficulty  
To bring joy and peace to others  
To help people in need  
To laugh and enjoy life  
To do good and turn from evil  
To forgive those who have hurt us  
And, most of all to love.



# Recruiting the best Staff for our School

## Resources

Many panels are now clear and positions in schools are being advertised in accordance with the requirements of [Circular 0044/2019](#). To assist schools with recruitment, CPSMA has prepared a few short podcasts on the recruitment of teachers and special needs assistants:

1. [Teacher Recruitment – Advertising](#)
2. [Teacher Recruitment – Shortlisting](#)
3. [Teacher Recruitment – Interviews](#)
4. [SNA Recruitment – Appointment Procedures](#)
5. [SNA Recruitment – Shortlisting and Interviews](#)
6. [SNA Recruitment – Post Interviews](#)

CPSMA developed a [suite of resources for recruitment](#) with all of the primary management bodies which includes checklists for each stage of the recruitment process which will be of assistance to chairpersons and principals when they are recruiting.

## Training

Having completed Module 1 ( Chairpersons with Principals ) and Module 2 (Our Board managing our School educating our Children ), CPSMA has now launched Module 3 which is called “Recruiting the best Staff for our School”. This Module is being presented for one or two nights in most Dioceses, so please contact your Diocesan Office to check the dates for your Diocese.

## NCSE Allocations

Allocations of hours received from **NCSE** for special education teachers or for special needs assistants, should be regarded as part of the school’s standard allocation for the year, which positions require to be advertised and recruited for in accordance with [Circular 0044/2019](#). A PTAF needs to be returned to the Department of Education, when the position is filled.

Additional hours received from the **Department of Education** in relation to new entrants to the country may be regarded as top-up hours, which are not part of the school’s standard allocation. These hours may vary from term to term. They may be accessed on OLCS and a PTAF is not required as there is no appointment to a position.

## Projected posts and EAL posts

Please note that projected and EAL posts, which are conditional on pupil numbers, may *only* be filled initially for a period of 2 months. If there are sufficient pupils for these posts, and this has been confirmed to you by the Department, the posts may then be advertised in the usual way, subject to panels being clear. If not, the posts will terminate as of 25th October 2024. Please call 01-6292462 or email CPSMA on [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie), if we can be of any assistance in the area of recruitment.



Traenáil ar Earcaíocht sna Forbairt, Co, na Gallaimhe

## Standard Application Form

Please note that following representations and in consultation with INTO, the Standard Application Form has been slightly modified to ensure that it doesn't contradict the job advertisement in any way. The new form is marked June 2024, but applications may continue to be accepted on the old form, which is substantially the same.

## Role of Trustees

For Catholic primary schools, the land and property on which the school is situated is usually legally registered with the Parish/Diocese/Religious Congregation in and through some form of Trusteeship.

Ultimately, it is the Trustee that has responsibility and liability for the upkeep of the property and for nominating the appropriate insurance agency to cover the required liability for the property. Dialogue on such matters between the board of management and the Trustees of the school is important.

While the Patron/Bishop may well be part of the Trustee body that is the registered owner of our parish schools, the board of management school should be aware that the Trustee holds a distinct role, different from that of the Patron.

It is important that some channels of communication be established between the Board of Management and the Trustee of the school property – i.e. the parish or religious congregation – on a regular basis. In particular, the Trustee should be kept informed of any new building project or the letting of any part of school property to a third party. In commencing this dialogue between the board of management and the Trustees, perhaps at the beginning or the end of school year meeting, boards could address the following basic questions:

1. Who are the Trustees of our school? (Parish/Diocesan Trust/Religious Congregation)
2. Is there any major property work being undertaken by our school that needs to be reported to the Trustee?
3. Are there any additional classrooms that have been added to our property in the past 12 months that should be reported to the Insurer (Allianz) for cover?

If you are unclear about the answer to any of these questions, please contact your local Diocesan Office, who should be in a position to assist you.

## Maintenance Guidance Manual for Schools

[Circular 0054/2024](#) launches the Department of Education's [Maintenance Guidance Manual for Schools](#) for 2024. This contains helpful checklists which will be of assistance to boards of management and schools.

If you have any concerns in relation to your school building, please make contact with your school insurers, who will advise you in relation thereto.

**N.B.** Any proposed changes or works to the school building or grounds needs to have the consent of the Patron/ Trustees.



# Standardised Tests – Reporting to Parents and Board

## Report to Parents

[Circular 0056/2011](#) provides for the reporting of Standardised Tests to parents. These results have to be provided in sufficient time to enable parents engage with the school before the school closes for the summer holidays. Here are some Department of Education answers to questions from parents.

### ***Q. Can I get “samples” of the paper tests or “past papers”?***

A. In order to protect the integrity of the tests, samples are not available to parents/guardians. Furthermore, “past papers” do not exist because the test content remains the same for a number of years, and previous versions may not correspond to the current curriculum or social context. Any samples or past papers would be identical to the actual test your child will sit.

**It is not intended that pupils would “practise the test” or that teachers would teach the actual test content or familiarise pupils with the exact test format. Test results are based on a comparison with a nationally representative sample of pupils who took the test with no special preparation. Therefore, pupils’ results are no longer valid or useful if pupils have “practised the test” or if teachers have “taught to the test”.**

It is worth noting that standardised tests are designed to reflect the curriculum and to provide information about pupil performance in relation to the curriculum. As such, the best way that your child can prepare for the test is to take part in the regular curriculum-based learning activities developed by their teacher.

### ***Q. Can I view my child’s test paper/test results?***

A. Yes, to comply with GDPR, our position would be that parents/guardians are entitled to view their child’s test script. This will usually be a completed booklet for First and Second class and a completed answer sheet alongside a blank booklet for Third to Sixth class.

Please note that the content of the tests is confidential and it is important that it does not circulate among the general public. Other pupils and schools will use these tests in subsequent years, and in order to protect the integrity of the tests, the content must be kept secure.

**As such, we would stipulate that a child’s answers be viewed under the supervision of a school staff member only.** The test content must not be photographed or photocopied. Your child’s school may ask you to leave your phone in a safe place outside the room (e.g. in the school office), in order to ensure that the test content remains secure.

## Report to the Board of Management

The aggregated assessment data from standardised tests should be reported annually to the Board of Management. The format for such reporting is contained in the Appendix to [Circular 0056/2011](#).

## Report to Department of Education

Circular [0040/2024](#) provides that Standardised test results should be uploaded onto the Department of Education [Esinet portal](#) on or before **Wednesday 19th June 2024**.



## School Tours & Summer Camps – A note from Allianz

Summertime is approaching, or so the calendar says at least ... and many schools will be busy planning end of term School Tours and Summer Camps. They differ to the normal day to day school routine. The pupils will be less inhibited, especially where the activity takes place away from the school. Schools are the masters of planning such outings and events but you can often have new questions and queries and hopefully we can help make these activities a little less stressful. At the end of the day, these are supposed to be the fun activities in the school year!

### School Tours

In general providers of commercial insurance policies will ensure a business description is provided & once the policy is incepted the routine business activities of that business will be covered. This is the same for your school insurance policy, in that Allianz provide cover to the school for normal school related activities. Every school go on a school tour, be it your junior infants going to the local petting farm or the sixth class students going to the outdoor adventure park or the fifth and sixth year trip to a European city. School tours are part and parcel of school life and as such they are covered under the school policy.

However, this doesn't mean that it's simply a case of picking a location or activity and off you go. A school's legal responsibility is to take reasonable care for the safety of your pupils. It is not possible for any individual or organisation to get everything right all the time, but the school is tasked with doing what is reasonably possible. What is reasonably possible is planning and consideration for the supervision required.

### Planning

To plan a school tour as safely as possible you should choose the appropriate – 1. venue, 2. mode of transport, and 3. type of activity – taking into account the age and capacity of the pupils. Schools will know the capability of the age groups more than any of us however it's always good to ask the question "is this appropriate?" before signing on the dotted line.

When arranging a school tour it's always recommended that the school obtain, from parents or guardians, a signed form indicating their consent to the pupil going on the school tour.

### Supervision

Adequate supervision is vital. The fact that pupils may from time to time be under the guidance of staff at an adventure centre or other activity does not remove the responsibility of the school staff to ensure that an adequate level of supervision is provided at all times.

Spirits will be high with a sense of adventure and bravery therefore, a greater level of supervision may be required than that which is required on the school premises.

- Younger pupils may require closer supervision.
- As far as possible only teachers or SNA's should accompany the pupils.
- There may not always be enough teachers or SNA's to supervise the pupils whilst on the school tour. In that case, the school may look to parents to help out. Parents or other volunteers assisting with supervision should always be under the guidance of a teacher and the school should be satisfied as to the suitability of all voluntary helpers and ensure child safeguarding procedures including vetting obligations are adhered to.





## Disclaimers & Activity Providers Insurance

What has become more common in recent years is certain activity providers are asking schools to sign disclaimers. Schools need to be very wary of this and should check out the request with Allianz (or with your own insurer or intermediary). These documents can be quite technical, with some disclaimers trying to extract the activity provider from any responsibility in relation to incidents/accidents even involving their supervision, equipment and training. Obviously a school should not be signing anything like this.

Furthermore, a school should always seek confirmation that the activity provider has their own insurance in place. A red flag is where a provider claims that “the school has insurance”. The school does have insurance but that is for the schools legal responsibility, it’s not there to cover a provider with faulty equipment or sub-standard staff training. If an incident was to happen and the provider doesn’t have insurance, in all likelihood the school may be found liable by a court for not taking reasonable precautions in ensuring the provider had adequate insurance.

## Summer Camps

Summer camps are generally one or two week courses centred on a specific activity. Activities usually range from academic classroom based camps, to arts and crafts, to field sports. The level of supervision required varies depending on the activities undertaken and the age profile of the children.

Summer camps are not automatically covered by the Allianz Custodian School Protection policy. However, the policy can be extended to provide cover for these summer camps, for which there will be an additional charge. It is important to note that the Allianz policy can only be extended to provide cover for the summer camp if it is organised with the full knowledge and authority of the Board of Management of the school, the proceeds are for the benefit of the school and the summer camp is under the control of the school.

Most summer camps are not organised by the school. Independent individuals (which may happen to be teachers in the school) or groups may offer or request to organise the summer camp based at the school premises. In these cases it is important you check that the organisers of the summer camp have:

- their own independent insurance arrangements in place. Ask the organisers of the summer camp to provide a letter of indemnity to the school from their insurers;
- their own child safeguarding procedures in place (you do not want a copy of these, just confirmation);
- a licence agreement in place with the school outlining the responsibilities of each party.

Furthermore it should be made clear on any marketing that this is a not a school camp.

If you require any additional information in relation to this article, please contact Allianz Education Team at 01 613 3966.

## Polling day expenses

Schools should be aware that they may be entitled to claim expenses incurred by the school in relation to the recent elections. The costs of caretakers opening and closing the school for the election could be recoverable, together with light, heat costs etc. for the day in question up to a specified limit.





## Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy strategy

The Literacy, numeracy and digital literacy strategy was launched last month by the Department of Education. The Strategy's vision is that 'every learner, from birth to young adulthood, develops the necessary literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills to thrive and flourish as an individual, to engage and contribute fully as an ethical, active member of society and to live a satisfying and rewarding life.'

Central to achieving this vision is the ambition to deliver systematic improvement in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy across the continuum of education from early learning and care to post-primary level, and to strengthen supports for the critical roles played by parents and communities in supporting the development of children's literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills. The areas for development and action, as identified in the strategy, span five pillars:

- **Pillar 1:** Enabling parents and communities to support learners' literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.
- **Pillar 2:** Supporting the professional practice of early years educators, childminders and teachers.
- **Pillar 3:** Supporting leadership in early learning and care and in the school system.
- **Pillar 4:** Improving the learner experience through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.
- **Pillar 5:** Supporting diverse learners to achieve their potential.

A comprehensive five-year implementation plan has been developed which serves as the blueprint that transforms our strategy into actionable steps. It outlines the specific actions and initiatives that will be undertaken. Measuring the success of the strategy will be a continuous process.

The Strategy and Implementation Plan can be accessed here:

[Literacy, Numeracy and Digital literacy Strategy](#)



## Research project on Identity and Ethos

### **Dear Principals and Chairs of Boards of Management,**

A couple of years ago we wrote asking for your assistance in our research project into Identity and Ethos in Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools in Ireland, Exploring the Attitudes and Behaviours of Stakeholders. Thank you for your help with the project and I'm delighted to say that the research reports can be found here: [www.mic.ul.ie/GRACE](http://www.mic.ul.ie/GRACE)

It was launched in the historic surrounds of Dublin City University's All Hallows Campus on April 23rd. It encompasses six reports on themes such as governance, school principals, religious education and stakeholder demographics. The project aims to establish 'a clear baseline and a set of signposts' for the advancement of primary and second level Catholic education in the Republic of Ireland. The research team distributed online surveys to Boards of Management, principals, teachers and school personnel at both primary and second level. Almost 4,000 responses were received, with 52 follow-up interviews conducted.

There are seven reports as follows:

- Overview of the GRACE Research Project and Summary of Findings and Recommendations,
- Report 1 Leaders and Staff in Catholic Schools in Ireland: Demographics and Religious Profile,
- Report 2 Stakeholders in Catholic Schools in Ireland: Training, Knowledge and Support,
- Report 3 Commitment to Faith Development & Religious Practice in Catholic Schools in Ireland,
- Report 4 Principals as Leaders of Identity and Ethos in Catholic Schools in Ireland,
- Report 5 Religious Education as an Expression of Identity and Ethos in Catholic Schools in Ireland,
- Report 6 Catholic Schools in Ireland: Responsibility, Oversight and Governance.

Thank you for your time and your support.

**Dr. Daniel O'Connell,**  
**Lecturer in Religious Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.**

## School Finances

[Press coverage](#) of the findings of the CPSMA Survey on School Finance was carried on the front page of the Irish Times, RTE website, Newstalk Breakfast, and RTE News at One (radio and news bulletins) and Spirit Radio.

The survey shows the extent and the impact of the problem in relation to school finances and highlights the struggles that schools are enduring to make ends meet. CPSMA will continue to advocate on behalf of schools, to end this underinvestment in our primary schools.

The Report of the CPSMA Survey is available to read [here](#). This Report has been sent to the Department of Education.

If you are unsure where to turn, in relation to school finances or payments, it may be of assistance to call the [FSSU](#) who provide support in relation to finances to all schools. You can also call our office to seek assistance.





## Continuing Professional Development in Catechetics

A Committee has been established to take on board recommendations for supports for teachers and CPD in the area of Religious Education.

In the interim, there are a number of free online and in person resources that can be used for CPD and to deepen your knowledge of faith. Any additional CPD opportunities or in-person events will be notified to members in due course.

Details of available CPD resources are available [here](#).

## Summer Programme 2024

This year, all primary schools can offer a summer programme for pupils with complex special educational needs and those at risk of educational disadvantage.

A school-based programme provides a more holistic experience for pupils and helps keep the connection with school and peers.

There are two schemes available in the 2024 Summer Programme for mainstream primary schools:

- the Primary School Scheme – for pupils in enrolled in special classes, as well as pupils in mainstream classes who have special educational needs, and those who are at risk of educational disadvantage
- literacy and numeracy summer camp/campaí samhraidh for pupils in DEIS schools

The following information is available for schools wishing to partake.

1. [Information for primary schools](#)
2. [2024 Summer Programme: Letter to Primary Schools](#)
3. [2024 Summer Programme for primary schools: Overview](#)
4. [Guidance on the 2024 Summer Programme for Mainstream Primary schools](#)
5. [Information session videos](#)
6. [DEIS Summer Camps](#)
7. [Online registration portal](#)
8. [Summer programme school stories](#)
9. [Information for parents](#)
10. [Payment information for schools](#)
11. [Queries and support](#)

Further information is available [here](#).

The Summer Programme helpline will operate Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm at 090648 4292. Email queries on the school-based programme can be sent to [schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie](mailto:schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie)



## CPSMA Membership

CPSMA membership runs from 1st July 2024 until 30th June 2025.

CPSMA and the Bishops as Patrons, share a commitment to the advancement and support of education in Catholic Primary Schools, both at a National and Diocesan level. One third of each annual membership subscription, funds in part, the work of the Patron in your diocese, supporting boards of management and principals at a local level.

The Department of Education has confirmed that membership of CPSMA is an appropriate school expense payable by the Board of Management.

Membership benefits include the following:

- Specialised advice tailored to individual schools
- Access to the Members section of the CPSMA website
- CPSMA Newsletter
- Board of Management training
- Access to the on-line CPSMA Guide for Chairpersons

Since last September, CPSMA has supported over 180 training events and handled over 13,000 queries from members.

**Payment can be made by clicking on the following link:**

[CPSMA Membership Renewal Form](#)

[Membership Rates](#)

If paying by EFT please note the new Bank Account Details:

Account Name: CPSMA, Bank of Ireland Maynooth.

IBAN: IE63BOFI90150370432810

BIC: BOFIE2D

**NB. Please insert the SCHOOL ROLL NUMBER in the remittance line/message for receiver, to enable us to identify the payment.**

Thanks to you and your board for the valuable work you do on behalf of Catholic education and we look forward to working with you during the school year 2024/2025.



## Ballraíocht CPSMA

Mairfidh ballraíocht CPSMA ón 1 Iúil 2024 go dtí an 30 Meitheamh 2025.

Tá an CPSMA agus na hEaspag mar Phátrúin, tiomanta do chur chun cinn agus tacaíocht an oideachais i mBunscoileanna Caitliceacha ag leibhéal Náisiúnta agus Deoise araon. Maoiníonn aon trian de do chistí ballraíochta bliantúla obair an Phátrúin, nó cuid de, i do dheoise, ag tacú le Bord Bainistíochta agus Príomhoidí ag leibhéal áitiúil.

Tá sé deimhnithe ag an Roinn Oideachais gur caitheachas scoile cúí iníoctha ag an mBord Bainistíochta é ballraíocht an CPSMA.

Áirítear iad seo a leanas le sochair bhallaíochta:

- Sainchomhairle atá oiriúnaithe do scoileanna aonair
- Rochtain ar rannóg na mball de shuíomh ghréasáin an CPSMA
- Nuachtlitir CPSMA
- Oiliúint don Bhord Bainistíochta
- Rochtáin ar Treoir CPSMA do Chathaoirligh na mBord Bainistíochta.

Ó Mheán Fómhair seo caite tá tacaíocht tugtha ag CPSMA do bhreis agus 180 imeacht Oiliúna, agus láimhseáil sé breis is 13,000 fiosrúchán ó chomhaltaí.

Is féidir íocaíocht a dhéanamh ach cliceáil ar an nasc seo a leanas:

Tabhair faoi ndeara go bhfuil an nasc seo i mbéarla amháin de bharr coinníollacha teicneolaíochta lenár gcóras bainistíochta sonraí

[Foirm Athnuachan Ballraíochta CPSMA](#) [Rátaí Ballraíochta](#)

Má tá tú ag íoc le EFT tabhair faoi deara Sonraí Cuntais Bainc nua:

Ainm an Chuntais: CPSMA, Banc na hÉireann Má Nuad.

IBAN: IE63BOFI90150370432810. BIC: BOFIE2D

**NB. Cuir isteach UIMHIR ROLLA NA SCOILE le do thoil sa líne íocaíochta / teachtaireacht don ghlacadóir chun gur féidir linn an íocaíocht a aithint.**

Ba mhaith le CPSMA buíochas a ghabháil leat féin agus le do bhord as an obair luachmhar a dhéanann tú ar son an oideachais Chaitlicigh agus táimid ag tnúth le bheith ag obair leat le linn na scoilbhliana 2024/25



# BeSMART primary school safety statement and risk assessment

BeSMART.ie is a free online safety statement and risk assessment tool developed by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). It aims to support employers, including boards of management, to manage health and safety in their workplace by following 4 simple steps.

This resource has been developed using the Guidelines on Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Primary Schools developed by the Department of Education, in collaboration with the HSA and other stakeholders.

While primary schools are not obligated to use BeSMART.ie to manage their health and safety, they may find the tool's easy-to-use structure a helpful and efficient way to do this. Any information recorded on the BeSMART.ie platform is completely confidential – the HSA does not have access to it.

BeSMART.ie can be completed as a guest or registered user. By registering, you can save your progress, complete the safety statement, and come back later to review and/or edit your safety statement. As a registered user, you can also create custom business types and manage your action list online. Register today at [www.besmart.ie](http://www.besmart.ie).

For further information, including FAQ's you can visit this [web page](#).

## Simple 4 step process



## Recent Circulars

- [0052/2024](#) Leave for Candidates in General and Local Elections for Special Needs Assistants employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools
- [0043/2024](#) Revision of Teacher Salaries under The Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 effective from 01 June 2024
- [0044/2024](#) Revision of Salaries for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) under The Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 effective from 01 June 2024
- [0046/2024](#) Revision of Salaries of Clerical Officers and Caretakers employed under the 1978/1979 Scheme under The Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 effective from 01 June 2024
- [0048/2024](#) Revision of Salaries for School Secretaries Previously Grant Funded Effective from 01 June 2024
- [0049/2024](#) Special Needs Assistant Allocation 2024/25
- [0053/2024](#) Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) – Supplementary Assignment Arrangements for the 2024/2025 school year
- [0054/2024](#) Maintenance guidance for all schools  
The guidance document: [Maintenance Guidance Manual for Schools](#)

**CPSMA offices remain open throughout the summer and we can be contacted on 01-6292462 or [info@cpsma.ie](mailto:info@cpsma.ie). We hope you get to take a proper break and look forward to working with you in the 2024/25 school year.**





## Interested in reducing your school's energy costs?



**Sign up today for a free training course to find out how you could save money by better managing your school's energy use.**

*The Energy in Education programme offers a range of supports developed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills designed to help schools to improve energy management practices, reduce school operating costs and protect the environment.*

### Attend an energy management course

More than 600 schools from all over Ireland have already taken part in Energy Management courses. Participants are guided step by step through the energy management process from understanding bills and energy use in the school to developing and implementing an energy saving plan.

The course involves attending three 2-hour workshops where schools are given access to a range of resources, online tools, expert advice and opportunities to network and share knowledge & experiences with other schools. The school can nominate any representative to attend e.g. member of staff or of the Board of Management.

Schools that attend courses may (depending on energy spend) be eligible for an Advice, Mentoring and Assessment (AMA) service. As part of this service an energy advisor will assist the school in identifying energy saving opportunities (detailed in a report) and provide three months mentoring.

Read case stories from a range of schools around Ireland [here](#)

### Book a course now!

Courses will be held online and will consist of three sessions of 2 hrs each - 10am to 12pm.

Course 1	Tue 24/09/24	Tue 08/10/24	Tue 22/10/24
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To register for Course 1 [click here](#)

Course 2	Thu 26/09/24	Thu 10/10/24	Thu 24/10/24
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To register for Course 2 [click here](#)

Any queries contact [energyineducation@seai.ie](mailto:energyineducation@seai.ie)



## Switch off for holidays!

Schools are about to close. When you are closing for mid-term, Summer, Christmas or Easter holidays it is important for your school to properly close down. Completely switch off as much energy consuming equipment as is practical to save money and save energy. A large school could waste over €1,000 on electricity over the summer.

Essential services such as fire alarm systems, security systems, CCTV, etc. must remain operational. But switching off non-essential equipment is a good idea. Make sure someone is designated to switch off and unplug each system.

To see how much you are going to save, it is a good idea to take electricity meter readings. When your school is ready to close, take two readings separated by 1 hour, then switch items of equipment off in accordance with this guidance sheet, then take another two readings. How much did the usage drop? In a large school you might find you used 8 units of electricity in the hour before you switched items off (8 kWh), and 3 units (3 kWh) after you switched most equipment off. Sustained over a 16 day break, several hundred euro would be saved.

If an hour is too long, use 15 minutes. Make sure lights are off before you begin. If your meter is digital and hard to read, you could just time how long it takes for the digital meter's LED to flash 10 or 20 times before and after the switch off campaign. If it takes twice as long for 10 flashes after the switch off, you have halved your electricity consumption. Take readings at the end of the break too, to see how much electricity has been used during the closure period.

## Electrical equipment

Schools use an increasing amount of electrical equipment. Although a lot of this equipment has an automatic standby mode, it is important that, over the holidays, as much of the equipment has been fully switched off (at the socket) as practical. When switching off electrical equipment for the holidays make sure you include:

- Computers and their screens
  - Servers, switches, routers, and WiFi devices
  - Photocopiers and printers
  - Fax machines, scanners, shredders, etc.
  - Projectors, smart boards, and laptops
  - TVs, DVD players, amplifiers, stereos
  - Public address systems, class change systems
  - Chargers/ adaptors for phones, laptops, speakers etc.
  - Defrost and switch off fridges, leaving the door open
  - Exhaust fans including those on time switches
  - Domestic hot water heaters
  - Water boilers, switch off and drain (use a kettle)
  - Vending machines, destock and switch off
- External lighting

### Computers, Screens, Servers, Switches, Routers, WiFi

It is best to choose the "Shut Down" option, and when the PC is powered down, to switch it off at the socket. The screen should also be switched off at the socket. Wasted energy in a poorly managed computer room could cost €300 over the summer. Your IT person should be asked which servers could be switched off. They should consider powering down routers, switches and WiFi devices, if servers can tolerate this. Some servers have UPS systems (battery backup). UPS systems continue to use significant energy even if the associated server is off. Switch off the UPS at the device first and then at the socket.

### Teaching Aids

Switch off smart boards etc. at the device using the power button, then switch off or unplug at the electrical socket.

### Office Equipment

Visit each room and look for anything which is plugged into a socket. Unplug it or switch it off at the socket, if practical. Some devices have no "off" switch on them at all, and can only be completely switched off at the electrical socket. The public address system can be switched off. Consider systems in the PE Hall or GP Hall too.

### Small Items

Switch off small items, or unplug them. A lot of devices now have a transformer either at the socket or on the cable, such as mobile phone chargers, PC speakers, and laptops. The transformer still uses energy unless it is switched off or unplugged.

### Refrigerators and Freezers, Vending Machines

Destock and defrost fridges and freezers before the end of term. Switch off as many as possible, leaving the doors open to ventilate the interior. Follow manufacturer's instructions on defrosting. Empty and switch off vending machines.

### Mechanical Ventilation

Ventilation fans may be under time-clock control. Make sure they will not come on over the holidays, unless needed.

### External Lighting

External lighting might be on a time clock and/or light sensor. Is it needed over the holidays? Switch off if practical.

## Energy for heating

### Domestic Hot Water

Switch off local electric water heaters. This can be done at a switch on the wall near the heater. If the school's water is heated in a boiler house, switch this off too. The school may need to leave one or two local heaters on for use by office staff and caretakers, but they should switch them off each day, even in term time.



Local electric water heaters can be hidden away in store rooms, in cupboards below sinks, and even above ceilings. Local heaters should be controlled by time clocks. Consider having 7-day time clocks fitted over the summer. Can the running hours on existing time clocks be reduced?

#### **Water Boilers and Chillers**

Switch off water boilers used for making tea. Drain them. If boiling water is required for one or two staff members over the holiday, use a domestic kettle instead. If the school has water coolers, read the instruction manual and see if they can be safely switched off too.

#### **Space Heating**

Space heating has probably already been switched off. Some schools have a "holiday/term" switch which must be switched to "holiday" position. The school may also have a "summer/winter" switch, and this should be switched to "summer" throughout summer, even during term time.

In the boiler house, make sure there are no space heating pumps left running unintentionally. This could happen, for example, if switches on the main boiler house control panel are left in the "hand" position. In small schools, there might just be a switch similar to the photograph above on the wall in the boiler house. On inspecting a boiler house, pumps and boilers may be off under automatic controls and could come on the next day. Be careful to make sure pumps do not run unintentionally over the summer.

The summer time is the best time to have the school's heating system given an annual maintenance check by a plumber. It is also a great time to take a gas meter reading, if you use gas.

Are there any storage or convector heaters which could come on? Switch them off.

## **Water conservation**

Make sure all taps are closed fully. If the school has urinals, but does not have automatic systems to switch the water off when the urinals are not being used, consider turning the water off at the urinal cistern. If the school is occupied over the holidays, the urinals can be switched on as needed, or WCs used instead.

Take water meter readings at the beginning and end of summer and other breaks. It might show that you have a water leak and help avoid a big bill from Irish Water. For more information, refer to the water conservation factsheet on the energy in education web site:  
[www.energyineducation.ie](http://www.energyineducation.ie)

## **Other items**

#### **Windows and Doors**

Close all windows. Make sure that window latches are closed. This will provide greater security. Close any blinds, particularly on south facing windows and ground floor windows. This will reduce overheating, and discourage security breaches. Close and secure all external doors, and close all internal doors including corridor fire doors. Lock any internal doors with locks, except corridor escape route doors.

These actions will improve security, and reduce the possibility of spread of fire. Ensure attic hatches are closed for similar reasons.

## **Special systems which must be left on**

Under no circumstances should anyone switch off or isolate in any way any device which relates to security or safety. The list below is not exhaustive, but covers most items:

- Fire Detection and Alarm Systems
- Access Control and Security Systems
- Emergency Exit Signs
- Emergency egress lighting
- CCTV cameras and their recording device
- The phone system
- Frost protection i.e. heating controls in winter

## **Special systems which can be switched off**

The screen associated with a CCTV system can and should be switched off. The CCTV system will continue to record. The screen is of no benefit if there is no one in the school to observe the screen.

## **Summary**

Schools can waste a lot of energy, especially electricity, over the holiday periods. It is important from a cost and environmental point of view to minimise this unnecessary energy use where practical by switching off items. Essential systems such as fire alarm and security must, of course, be left running. Most other items can be switched off at the socket. Not only will this save money, but it will also reduce the risk of fire from faulty electrical equipment.

# Employee Assistance Service

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

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

- ✓ Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
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- ✓ Referral to Counselling



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