



Newsletter

No. 79 October 2024

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An t-Oide (le Séamus Ó hAodha)

Uasal ceird an oide:

Mar rí ar imeall trá,

Chuir ar tonn na soithigh

'S sheoil go hoscailt bá.

Aoibheann ceird an oide:

Mar gharnóir lá lúil

D'aistrigh sciamh na scoithe

Ó ghrianán go húir.

Uaigneach ceird an oide:

Mar mhaithrín leí féin

Tar éis imeacht a clainne

Thar tairsigh i gcéin.

Welcome to new Principals and Chairpersons

We extend a special welcome to all new principals and to all those who have been appointed as principal or chairperson this year. Please log your contact details with our office to ensure that you can access our website, receive our newsletter and avail of our advice lines.

We are here to support you in your role and would welcome the chance to have a chat with you about any aspect of your work, so please pick up the phone and let us know that you are there! Our team are experienced and will most likely have come across many of the issues currently arising for you in your role at school.

✓ Mini checklist for this term

- School Calendar should be shared with teachers, parents and school community as soon as possible.
- Board of Management meetings can be scheduled, if suitable, to give as much notice as possible to members.
- Seniority List of teachers employed in a permanent/CID capacity should be posted on staff noticeboard. Seniority listing of special needs assistants employed in the school should be made available to the special needs assistants.
- Annual census returns based on enrolment on 30th September 2024 are due in October.
- Check that school has correct number of promoted posts (as per [Circular 0029/24](#)).
- Names of substitutes since the last board meeting should be listed at next board meeting. The reason for the substitution should not be stated.
- Check that you have emergency contact numbers for all staff members.
- The school academic year matches the school financial year, so copies of relevant financial details for the Period 01/09/23 – 31/08/24 should be now forwarded to your school accountant. See [FSSU Webinar – Preparation & Submission of School Accounts 23/24](#).

Admissions

The Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 (Admission Policies and Admission of Students) Regulations 2020 and [Circular 0007/2020](#) require schools to publish their Admission Policy and make it available on request to a parent or member of the public. Schools are also required to publish their Annual Admission Notice, prior to taking applications for the new school year. The Annual Admission Notice must be published one week before applications for enrolment are received.

CPSMA has updated its template Admission documents to assist schools in managing their Admissions' procedures. The documents can be accessed at the following links:

- [Template Application for Admission Junior Infants](#)
- [Template Application for Admission to classes other than Junior Infants](#)
- [Template Letter of offer of admission to Junior Infants with acceptance form attached](#)
- [Template letter of offer of admission to class \(other than junior infants\) with acceptance form attached](#)
- [Template Letter of refusal of a place in Junior Infants](#)
- [Template Letter of refusal of a place in classes other than Junior Infants](#)
- [DE Template Request Form for Review by Board of Management where Admission has been refused by Principal](#)

Decisions in relation to applications must be communicated no later than three weeks after the closing date for applications. Letters of Offer must state the date by which such offer has to be accepted and must advise that failure to accept the offer, within this period, may result in the offer being withdrawn.

It is important to note that the Admission Policy has been approved by your Patron and any changes thereto will need Patron approval. Decisions in relation to admission of students are made by the principal of the school and may be reviewed by the Board, if requested by a parent/guardian. In the event of a refusal by a board, an appeal can be brought in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Vetting

Schools should ensure that Garda vetting requirements for teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff, substitute teachers, substitute SNAs, student teachers, coaches etc. are complied with. New teachers should provide schools with an email using digitary core software to enable their vetting status with the Teaching Council to be checked. This applies equally to substitute teachers and temporary teachers covering brief absences. SNAs, (including substitute SNAs) are vetted through the local Diocesan office. All new staff should have completed and signed Statutory Declarations and Forms of Undertaking. These forms are available as an appendix to [Circular 0031/2016](#).

Copies of Vetting disclosures, statutory declarations and forms of undertakings should be retained by the school in accordance with the schools data retention policy. CPSMA advises retaining these indefinitely.

In essence, any person engaging with children in your school is required to be vetted. If you have any questions or require assistance in this area, please contact our office and one of our advisers will assist you.





Working Together – Ag Obair le Céile

The original *Working Together* procedures have been in place since 2000 and both the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) and Voluntary Primary Management Bodies at primary level agreed that it was timely to review the document to bring it up-to-date and in line with legislative developments.

It is intended that the revised processes contained in *Working Together 2024 – Ag Obair Le Chéile* will ensure a standard approach across primary schools in relation to the prevention of workplace disputes, as well as providing a process by which any such disputes are addressed. There is also a key focus on best practice for positive staff relations in the new document.

Boards of management are encouraged to adopt the updated *Working Together 2024 – Ag Obair le Chéile* document at their next board meeting and to circulate the document to their staff.

The updated document *Working Together 2024 – Ag Obair le Chéile* is available for download in English and Irish below.

- [Working Together 2024](#)
- [Ag Obair le Chéile 2024](#)



Finance

FSSU Newly Appointed Principals Training Webinar

Tuesday 8th of October at 4pm (approx. 1 hour)

To support new Principals in their role, the FSSU will host a training webinar on Tuesday 8th of October at 4pm. This webinar is designed to help new Principals understand the necessary internal financial controls within their schools.

The webinar will address a number of practical issues. Some examples of items that will be covered are the month-end financial review, operation of bank accounts and the purchasing system.

The webinar is free of charge. Should you be unable to attend on the day, a recording of the webinar will be available on www.fssu.ie. By registering for the webinar you will receive a recording of the webinar in a follow up email after the event. Click [here](#) to register.



SNA Workforce Development Unit

The Department of Education established a dedicated SNA Workforce Development Unit within its Special Education Section to examine the special needs assistant (SNA) role and any reform or development required. The key areas to be addressed in consultation with stakeholders are :

- Review and Development of the SNA role
- Establishment of a Quality Assurance Framework
- Establishment of a SNA Learning and Development Programme
- Supporting SNA Recruitment, Retention and Diversity
- Development of a Communications Strategy to ensure optimum communication and collaboration with all stakeholders.

The Department of Education sought the views of the SNA workforce on matters relevant to their role. See: [The Report on the National Survey of the Special Needs Assistants.](#)

The views of school leaders were also sought on the role and duties of the SNA, learning and development for SNAs, issues around recruitment, retention and diversity and how best school leaders can communicate with SNAs in the school community. See: [The Role of Special Needs Assistants: Report on Focus Groups with School Leaders.](#)

We will update members on further developments in this area. In the meantime, it might be helpful to advise staff of the existence of the SNA Information Hub on the Departments website as per the poster below. English version available [here](#).

Is dhuitse atá an Mol Eolais CRS.

Is acmhainn ar líne é an Mol CRS a sholáthraíonn rochtain ar fhaisnéis shaincheaptha atá suas chun dáta agus atá ábhartha do ról an Chúntóra Riachtanas Speisialta.

Léigh an tuarascáil: gov.ie/SNAhub

Príomhghnéithe

- Teacht ar eolas faoi chiorcláin agus treoirlínte
- Eolas maidir le roghanna oiliúna ábhartha
- Rannóg Nuachtabí ar an eolas faoi na polasaithe agus na forbairtí ábhartha is déanaí

Cén fáth a n-úsáidtear an Mol?

- Ionad ilfhreastail le haghaidh eolas chuinn, ar féidir brath air
- Faigh amach faoi thuarastail agus pinsin na Cúntóirí Riachtanas Speisialta
- Foghlaim faoi Phlean Forbartha an Fhórsa Saothair CRS, atá á fhorbairt
- Foghlaim faoin tSeirbhís Cúnaímh d'Fhostaithe (EAS)
- Leas a bhaint as an Scéim Rothaíochta chun na hOibre

Scan anseo

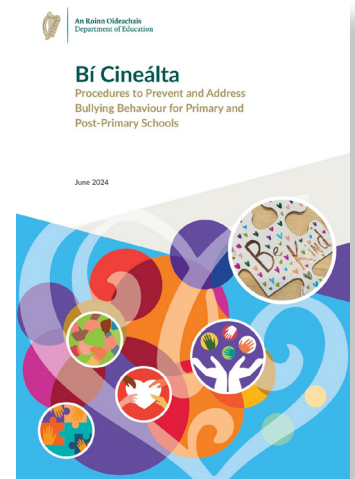
An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education



Anti-Bullying

What's New?

- The new [Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#) were published in June 2024.
- The Department's Inspectorate report [Perspectives on Bullying Behaviour](#) was published June 2024 and summarises insights from students, parents, teachers, and principals on the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies in Irish schools.
- [Circular 0055/2024](#) provides that the board of management must develop its Bí Cineálta policy during the 2024/2025 school year and that the Bí Cineálta policy and procedures should be formally adopted prior to the commencement of the **2025/2026** school year.



What's changed?

An overview of the key areas of change from the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013 is outlined in **Appendix G** of the Bí Cineálta Procedures. These changes include the following:

- Updated definition of bullying behaviour based on *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (2022)*
- Increased focus on a partnership approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour:
- Increased oversight
- New template documents

What assistance is available to schools?

Phase 1: Provision of Information Seminars to Principals

The Department will provide online information seminars to school leaders during October 2024. The Inspectorate will also introduce the new Wellbeing Promotion inspection model. The online information seminars will be held on the following dates:

Tuesday	8 October 2024	13.30–15.30
Tuesday	15 October 2024	10.30–12.30
Wednesday	16 October 2024	13.30–15.30
Tuesday	22 October 2024	10.30–12.30

You may register to attend the seminar at your preferred date by clicking on this [link](#).

Phase 2: Provision of Teacher Professional Learning by Oide

Oide will provide in-person professional learning to two members of school staff from all schools and centres for education during the 2024/2025 school year.

Phase 3: Half-Day School Closure

Schools may avail of a half-day school closure during the 2024/2025 school year to facilitate the engagement of all school staff with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.





The Cineáltas showcase and best practice event took place in Croke Park last week to recognise the work of schools striving to tackle and prevent bullying in their school communities. It was a real success and shows the great strides being made by schools in this difficult area. Is féidir linn!

Cineáltas showcase event – September 2024



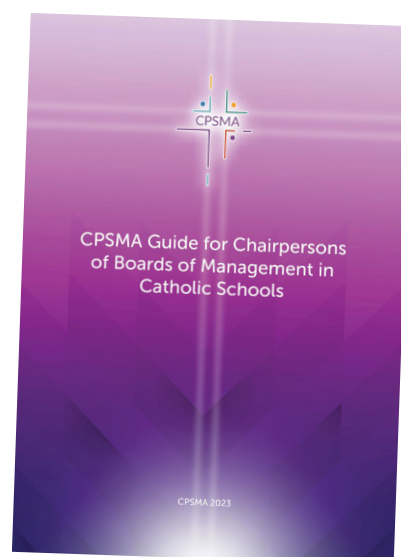
CPSMA Guide for Chairpersons

Our 'CPSMA Guide for Chairpersons' is now available to members on www.cpsma.ie. Simply log in to your account, go to the Board of Management icon and then choose 'Support Materials for Boards of Management'. Brimming with practical tips and advice, this 45-page document includes live links to other helpful resources.

Chapter headings include:	Helpful templates and checklists in the appendices include:
Introduction to Your Role as Chairperson	Sample Prayers for Board Meeting
The Roles of Patron and Chairperson	Sample Agenda for Board Meeting
Support for you as Chairperson	Sample Minutes of Board Meeting
Relationships in the School	Sample Principal's Report for Board Meeting
An Introduction to Ethos	
The Board as an Employer	
Chairing the Board Meeting	

Do chathaoirligh sna scoileanna gaeltachta agus gaelscoileanna, tá leagan gaeilge den treoir ar fáil leis. Táthar ag súil go bhfaighidh cathaoirligh fiúntas agus tairbhe as an treoir leabhar agus go mbeidh tuilleadh acmhainní ar fáil as gaeige dár scoileanna lán-ghaelacha. Mar sin, bainígí usáid as agus dean teagmháil linn má tá tuilleadh eolais uait.

The [CPSMA Podcast for board members](#) is a helpful way to remind board members about their role on the board of management. This can be sent to board members or played at a board meeting.





Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) School Meals

The School Meals Programme provides funding towards the provision of food services for disadvantaged school children.

More information on the Programme is available in the below links:

- [School Meals Scheme](#)
- [Minister Humphreys announces 900 additional Primary Schools approved for Hot School Meals](#)
- [List of Schools approved for the Hot School Meals Programme from April 2024](#)

To calculate the estimated value of the contract, you can use the Excel file below add the number of students and amend the number of days, if necessary: [School Meals Calculator](#)

To procure a service provider for the provision of **Hot Meals**, the steps below must be followed:

1. **When the total contract value is less than €50,000 or above €750,000 for a 3-year term**, the school can contact the [SPU](#) for further guidance.
2. **When the total contract value exceeds €50,000 for a 3-year term**, a tender process is required. To publish a tender, the school will need to:

A : Have an [eTenders](#) account

- If you have previously used eTenders' old platform, but not the new one, please check the first-time login guide to the new platform [here](#).
- If you are unsure if your school has an eTenders account, you can email irish-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com with your school's details and they will assist you in retrieving your login credentials or setting up a new school's account.
- Besides the main school account, one other staff/BOM member must be named as an evaluator, as two people are needed to publish a tender.



B : Amend the documents below according to the school's needs

- [Call For Tender \(CFT\)](#)
- [Tender Response Document \(TRD\)](#)
- [Service Level Agreement \(SLA\)](#)
- [Draft Contract](#)

C : Publish a Call For Tender (CFT) on eTenders. Guidance is available below.

- [Introduction to eTenders Guide](#)
- [Guidance Videos](#)
- A specific guide, [Create & Publish a CFT Guide](#), was designed to assist schools with the publication of school meals scheme tenders
- A [Procurement Checklist](#) was also developed to guide schools through their procurement process

D: Guidance on the tender process, including the evaluation of tenders received, is available on request. Visit spu.ie to see the range of supports available.

Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) Electricity Supply for Schools

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP), in close consultation with the Department of Education and the School Procurement Unit (SPU), has awarded the new contract for the supply of electricity to schools to Electric Ireland. The new contract, which will run for a period of three years, commences on 1st May 2024 and terminates on 30th April 2027.

It is important to be aware that if your school is outside of the OGP's school contract and is not already covered under a formal fixed-term contract with one of the suppliers of electricity, then it is probable that your school is being charged at a 'default' rate, which will be considerably higher than the rate you could be achieving within the OGP contract. If you wish to add your school to the OGP contract, please follow the instructions below.

You are invited to complete the simple [online registration form](#), and we recommend you use a school's e-mail address as this will be used for further communication throughout the duration of the contract. Together with this registration, please include a scanned copy of both sides of a recent electricity bill. The OGP will subsequently send you an offer of a contract detailing the tariff rates available to you. If you accept the offer of this new contract, please complete the accompanying paperwork with the contract offer and return it to the email address supplied in the contract documentation as soon as possible. Once you sign up for this contract and unless you are advised otherwise, your school will also be automatically included in the next contract due to commence in May 2027.

If you wish to join the OGP contract in circumstances where your school is currently in a contract with any of the electricity suppliers, you are entitled to find out from your provider for how much longer you are tied to that contract and what, if any, early exit charge may apply if you decide to migrate to the OGP contract.

Any questions or points of clarification required on anything contained above can be forwarded to the SPU team through their [Contact Us form](#).



New Building Works

For those schools engaging in new building works **remember:**

- The Patron/Trustee must grant approval for all building works before an application is made to the Department of Education.
- In all projects, approval from the Department for each stage is required before the project can progress to the next stage.
- The first stage is always the appointment of consultants using the appropriate guidelines for the type of project approved.
- The Department will not fund any building works retrospectively. No works can commence without a tender report being submitted to the Department and without **written approval** to commence the works.
- The Board should work closely with its Design Team at all times. It is vital that all instructions to contractors should come through the Design Team only and should have the prior approval of the Department.
- All consultants must have appropriate insurances in place before being appointed by a Board of Management and they must be tax compliant.
- The school's Insurance Company should be notified once a Design Team is appointed and again when the project is completed. This also applies to all Modular units as well as permanent builds.
- The letter of sanction from the Department will give details of who to contact and it is essential to make contact with the appropriate advisers and to strictly follow the required processes at all times.
- If you require any assistance with projects, you may contact CPSMA on 01-6292462 or at info@cpsma.ie in the first instance and we will direct you as required.



Data Protection Webinar

CPSMA recently hosted a live Webinar on Data Protection in Schools. This event was for Primary School Chairpersons and Principals. The webinar addressed all aspects of GDPR and Data Protection in schools in a practical and clear fashion. It will be available shortly on our website under Webinars.



Child Protection Guidance

CPSMA is in the process of updating our child protection guidance and will shortly be sending you details of this advice and guidance.



Allianz: School Buildings – Insurance

The impact of construction inflation

Over recent years, construction costs have increased due to unprecedented levels of construction inflation. Many primary schools have not reviewed their building sums insured to reflect the increased cost of building, which could lead to financial consequences in the event of a claim.

What you can do

To ensure your school is adequately covered, Allianz recommend that all schools assess the adequacy of their building sums insured. Here are two options to help you with this review:

3. **Professional Valuation:** Contact a Chartered Surveyor to conduct a professional reinstatement valuation of your school building(s).
4. **Indicative Valuation:** Your local Allianz representative can provide an indicative reinstatement valuation for schools insured directly with Allianz. Contact details for Allianz reps can be found here [Schools Insurance Local Representatives – Allianz Insurance](#). Schools that use an intermediary should contact their intermediary for assistance.

Please note that while Allianz representatives can provide an indicative guideline valuation, they are not Chartered Surveyors. For an accurate assessment, Allianz strongly recommend a professional valuation, carried out by a professional Chartered Surveyor.

Consequences of underinsurance

The Average Condition is a clause in insurance policies that can significantly affect the amount you receive, if you make a claim for damage to your school building(s). It comes into play if your building(s) are under-insured, meaning they are insured for less than their actual value.

How Does It Work?

Insured amount: Suppose your school building is insured for €5,000,000.

Actual rebuild cost: The real cost to rebuild the school is €10,000,000.

Under-insurance: In this case, your school is under-insured by 50% because the insured amount is only half of the actual rebuild cost.

If you need to make a claim, the Average Condition means that the payout you receive will be reduced by the same percentage that your building is under-insured. So, if your building is 50% under-insured, your claim payout will be reduced by 50%.

Benefits of acting now

If a valuation of your school suggests that you need to increase your building sum insured, Allianz will provide this additional cover free of charge until your next renewal date (excluding the addition of newly acquired or erected buildings, alterations, additions or improvements to buildings).

Cost of increasing cover from your next renewal date

To give schools an indication of cost, a 25% increase in your building sum insured would result in approximately a 10% premium increase at policy renewal. A 50% increase would result in about a 20% premium increase. Importantly, there is no charge for increasing your building sum insured



mid-term (excluding the addition of newly acquired or erected buildings, alterations, additions or improvements to buildings).

Allianz are here to help

If schools have any questions or need assistance with this process, please feel free to contact the Allianz Education Team on 01 613 3966 or at education@allianz.ie Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, or contact your local representative [Schools Insurance Local Representatives - Allianz Insurance](#). Please ensure that you have your policy number to hand. Schools that use an intermediary should contact their intermediary for assistance.

Role of Trustees in Catholic primary schools

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 further.



Patrons' Programme

Schools sometimes query whether the School Books Scheme extends to books such as *Grow in Love*, purchased for Religious Education. The Department have confirmed that the scheme extends to books covered under patrons' programmes. So, *Grow in Love* may be ordered as part of the scheme.





Employee Assistance Service (EAS)

The 'Wellbeing Together' Employee Assistance Service is a confidential programme at no additional cost that provides you and your family members with immediate help and support in managing whatever work or personal issues you are facing.

EAS offers unlimited access for you and your family to a telephone helpline, available, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Counselling is also available to family members. This includes your spouse, civil partner or dependent, where the family member can be described as a person over the age of 16 and residing at the family home.

Call on:

- Freephone: 1800 411 057
- WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010
- SMS: Text 'Hi' to 087 145 2056nd support in managing whatever work or personal issues you are facing.

Employees can access the Spectrum.Life wellbeing portal as follows:

- sign up at [Spectrum.Life](#)
- 'organisation code' will be pre-populated. If not, organisation code is ylviiu17
- Access to [Principal and Deputy Principal Mental Health Seminars](#)
- Access to [eLearning on the Wellbeing Together for the school community](#)

EAS Virtual events

This month's events

Mindful mornings meditation for World Mental Health Day	10 Oct 2024	07:30–07:50
World Mental Health Day understanding anxiety in the workplace	10 Oct 2024	13:15–14:00
World Mental Health Day mind and body Pilates	10 Oct 2024	18:00–18:30
World Menopause Day	16 Oct 2024	13:15–14:00
Building resilience part 2 thriving through tough times	23 Oct 2024	13:15–14:00

For further information contact: [gov.ie Employee Assistance Service for school staff in recognised primary and post-primary schools](#) (www.gov.ie)



Recent Circulars

- 0054/2024 [Maintenance guidance for all schools](#)
- 0050/2024 [Home Tuition Grant Scheme 2024/2025 Special Education Component](#)
- 0056/2024 [Revision of capitation grant rates to recognised primary schools 2024](#)
- 0058/2024 [Parent's Leave Scheme for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools](#)
- 0059/2024 [Parent's Leave Scheme for Special Needs Assistants employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools](#)
- 0060/2024 [Home Tuition- No School Place\(NSP\) 2024-25](#)
- 0061/2024 [Home Tuition-Maternity Related Absence\(MRA\) 2024-25](#)
- 0062/2024 [Home Tuition- Children in Care \(CIC\) 2024-25](#)
- 0055/2024 [Publication of Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#)
- 0067/2024 [Voluntary Search and Rescue Leave for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools](#)
- 0069/2024 [Professional Master of Education \(PME\) Fee Refund Scheme](#)
- 0073/2024 [Revision of Teacher Salaries under The Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026 effective from 01 October 2024](#)
- 0074/2024 [Revision of Salaries for Special Needs Assistants \(SNAs\) under The Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026 effective from 01 October 2024](#)
- 0076/2024 [Revision of Salaries of Clerical Officers and Caretakers employed under the 1978/1979 Scheme under The Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026 effective from 01 October 2024](#)
- 0078/2024 [Revision of Salaries for School Secretaries Previously Grant Funded Effective from 01 October 2024](#)



Recent Publications

- [Catalogue of wellbeing resources for primary schools](#)
- [Guidance documents for school self evaluation \(SSE\)](#)
- [SSE resources for primary school](#)
- [Climate action roadmap](#)
- [Periodic critical reviews – Teaching Council](#)
- [School secretaries leave administration information notes](#)
- [School secretaries leave administration circulars](#)
- [SSE for wellbeing in schools](#)
- [OECD review of resourcing schools to address educational disadvantage in Ireland and supporting documents](#)
- [Data strategy 2024 27](#)
- [Bi Cinealta resources for primary schools post primary schools and parents](#)



Recent Press Releases

- [Inspectorate publishes Thematic Report on Early Intervention Classes for Children with Autism](#)
- [Ministers announce the establishment of an Educational Therapy Support Service](#)
- [Ministers publish Traveller and Roma Education Strategy 2024 2030](#)
- [Minister announces commission of investigation, and report of scoping inquiry to be published](#)
- [Inspectorate reports on Education for Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools](#)
- [Minister launches resources to support the delivery of PE through Irish](#)